THE

Christian Life.

Wherein is shew'd,

I. The Worth and Excellency of the Soul.
II. The Divinity and Incarnation of our Saviour.
III. The Authority of the Holy Scripture.
IV. A Dissuasive from Apostacy.

VOL. V. and Last.

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To the Honourable

SUSANNA NOEL,

(Mother to the Right Honourable *Baptiſt* Earl of *Gainsborough*,)

THis laſt Volume of the Works of my Dear Deceaſed Friend, the Reverend Dr. Scott, *is humbly and gratefully Dedicated, by,*

Her Honours,

Moſt obliged,

and moſt Devoted Servant,

Humphrey Zouch.

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OF

OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

PART IV.

MATTH. xvi. 26.

What is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?

IN the 24*th.* verſe our *Saviour* urges his Diſciples to that neceſſary Duty of *denying themſelves*, that is, of ſurrendering up their Wills to the conduct of his, and renouncing all their *Worldly* Intereſt when it comes in Competition with their Duty, and of taking up their Croſs, and following him; that is, of preparing themſelves to endure Perſecution for his ſake, and to perſiſt couragiouſly in the Profeſſion and Practice of his *Religion* whatſoever Oppoſitions they ſhould meet with from the World. And to preſs them hereunto, he urges this Argument, *Ver.* 25. *For*

who-

whoſoever will ſave his Life ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever will loſe his Life, ſhall find it. Where the *Greek* Word ψυχὴ which we render *Life*, may perhaps be better render'd *Himſelf*, it being *familiar* both with *Hebrews* and *Syrians* to call a man's Life and Soul *Himſelf:* ſo the Pſalmiſt, *thou ſhalt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, thou ſhalt not leave me Periſhing in my Grave, *Pſal.* 16. 10. And *Levit.* 20. 25. *Ye ſhall not make your Souls abominable, i.e.* your ſelves; And that it ſhould be ſo render'd here is evident, becauſe St. *Luke* ſo expounds it, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away?* Luke 9. 25. And indeed the Soul being the *Principal* Part of a Man and that which advances him into a *Species* of Being above that of a *mere* Animal, may very well be called *himſelf*, according to that of *Hierocles*, σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σὸν, τὰ δὲ ἐκτὸς τοῦ σωμάτος. *Thy Soul is Thee, thy Body, thine, and thy outward Goods thy Bodies.* And if inſtead of *Life* we render ψυχὴ *Himſelf*, the Words will be very *plain* and *eaſy*; for whoſoever will ſave himſelf by renouncing me and my *Religion*, ſhall loſe himſelf forever; and whoſoever will be content to loſe himſelf for my ſake, ſhall ſave himſelf forever. And this he farther inforces in the Text, *What is a Man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole*

whole World, and loſe his own Soul? or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? that is, what will it *avail* a Man to *gain* the whole World, if he *forever* ruin himſelf by it? and when he hath thus *ruined* himſelf, what would he give, if it were in his Power, to ſave and recover himſelf again? The words thus explained, I ſhall reſolve the ſenſe of them into theſe five Propoſitions.

I. That a Man; or the Soul of a Man is a Thing of *ineſtimable* Price and Value; for our *Saviour* here weighs it againſt the whole World, that is, againſt all the *Pleaſures*, *Profits*, and *Honours* that this *inferiour* World can afford; and declares that in the *juſt* Ballance of his Eſteem it out-weighs them all. And certainly that muſt needs be *exceeding precious*, whoſe Worth the whole World cannot *counter-poiſe*.

II. That this *precious* Soul may be loſt. This our *Saviour* plainly ſuppoſes in theſe Words, *if he loſe his own Soul.*

III. That our *renouncing* of *Chriſt* and his *Religion* will moſt certainly infer this Loſs. For theſe Words, as I have ſhewed you, our *Saviour* urges as an Argument to diſſuade Men from *Apoſtacy*; but if without *loſing* our Souls, we might *renounce* him and *apoſtatize* from him, there would be no *Force* in all

this Argument to diſſuade us from it

IV. That when this Soul is *loſt*, 'tis *loſt* irrecoverably. *What ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* where the *Greek* Word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is uſed in the ſame ſenſe with ἐξίλασμα, which ſignifies a price of Redemption, denoting that if a Man ſhould or could give never ſo much to buy his Soul from Perdition, yet no *Price* of Redemption will be *taken* for it.

V. That this *irrecoverable* Loſs of a Soul is of ſuch a *vaſt* Moment, that the Gain of the whole World is not *ſufficient* to compenſate it. *What is a Man profited*, that is, he is not at all *profited*, nay he is ſo far from *that* that he is a *vaſt* Loſer.

I. That the Soul of a Man is a Thing of an *ineſtimable* Price and Value. And for the Proof of this Propoſition, I ſhall endeavour theſe *two* Things.

Firſt, To repreſent to you of what *vaſt* Worth it is in Reſpect of its own *natural* Capacities.

Secondly, To ſhew you of what *vaſt* Eſteem it is in the Judgment of all thoſe who, as we muſt needs ſuppoſe, do beſt *underſtand* the Worth of it.

1. I ſhall endeavour to repreſent to you of what *vaſt* Worth it is in Reſpect of its own

own *natural* Capacities, particularly in theſe *four*. (1.) In Reſpect of its Capacity of *Underſtanding*. (2.) Of *Moral Perfection*. (3.) Of *Pleaſure* and *Delight*. (4.) Of *Immortality*.

1. The Soul of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in Reſpect of its Capacity of *Underſtanding*. For certainly to *underſtand*, is the *greateſt* and *nobleſt* Operation that a Being is *capable* of; for it is this that gives Beauty and Excellence to all our *other* Operations whether they be *natural* or *moral*: 'Tis this that propoſes the *Ends*, and directs the Courſe, and Preſcribes the Meaſures of all our *other* Actions; and tho we had never ſo much *Force* or *Power*, yet unleſs we had *Underſtanding* to guide and manage it, it would be altogether inſignificant. For *Blind* Power acts at Random, and if we had the Force of a *Whirl-wind*, yet without a *Mind* to ſtear and manage it, it would be an *equal* Chance whether we did *well* or *ill* with it. So that unleſs there were ſome *Underſtanding* either *within* or *without* us to conduct our *active Powers*, and determine them to our *Good*, we were as good be altogether without them; becauſe while they act by *Chance* it is at leaſt an *equal* Lay whether they will *injure* or *advantage* us. Since therefore *Underſtanding* is the *Rule* and *Meaſure* of all our *other* Powers,

it neceſſarily follows that *it ſelf* is the *greateſt* and *nobleſt* of them all. What an *excellent* Being therefore muſt a Soul be, in which this *great* and *Sovereign* Power reſides? a *Power*, that can collect into it ſelf ſuch *prodigious* Numbers of *ſimple Apprehenſions*, and by comparing *one* with the *other*, can connect them into *true* Propoſitions, and upon *each* of theſe can run ſuch *long* and *curious* Deſcants of Diſcourſe, till it hath drawn out all their Conſequents into a Chain of *wiſe* and *coherent* Notions, and ſorted theſe into ſuch *various Syſtems* of *uſeful* Arts and Sciences; That can diſcern the *Harmonious* Contextures of Truths with Truths, the *ſecret* Links and Junctures of *coherent* Notions, trace up *Effects* to their *Cauſes*, and ſift the *remoteſt* Conſequents to their *natural* Principles; That can caſt *abroad* its *ſharp-ſighted* Thoughts over the whole *Extent* of Beings, and, like the *Sun* with its *out-ſtretched* Rays, reach the *remoteſt* Objects; That can in the *Twinkling of an Eye* expatiate through all the *Univerſe*, and keep *Correſpondence* with *both* Worlds; can prick out the Paths of the *Heavenly* Bodies, and meaſure the Circles of their Motion, ſpan the whole *Surface* of the Earth, and dive into its *Capacious* Womb, and there diſcover the *numerous* Offſprings with which it is continually teeming; That can ſail into the

the World of *Spirits* by the *never-varying* Compaſs of its *Reaſon*, and diſcover thoſe *inviſible* Regions of *Happineſs* and *Miſery*, which are altogether out of our ſight whileſt we ſtand upon this *hither* Shore; In a word, That can aſcend from Cauſe to Cauſe, to *God* who is the *Cauſe* of all, and with its *Eagle-Eyes* can *gaze* upon that *glorious* Sun, and dive into the *infinite Abyſs* of his *divine* Perfections. What an *excellent* Being therefore is that *Soul* that is endowed with ſuch a *vaſt* Capacity of *Underſtanding*, and with its *piercing* Eye can reach ſuch an *immenſe* Compaſs of Beings, and travail through ſo *vaſt* an *Horizon* of Truth? Doubtleſs if *humane* Souls had no *other* Capacity to *value* themſelves by, but only this, *this* were enough to give them the *Preheminence* over all *inferiour* Beings, and *render* them the moſt *glorious* Part of all this *ſublunary* World.

2. The *Soul* of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in Reſpect of its Capacity of *Moral Perfection*. For by the Exerciſe of thoſe *humane Vertues* which are *proper* to it in this ſtate of Conjunction with the Body, it is capable of raiſing it ſelf to the *Perfection* of thoſe *Angelical* Natures, which of all Creatures do moſt nearly *approach* and *reſemble* the *great* Creator, and *Fountain* of all *Perfection*. For by keeping a *due* Reſtraint upon its bodily Ap-

petites, and thereby gradually weaning it ſelf from the *Pleaſures* of the Body, it may by degrees be *educated* and *trained* up to lead the Life, and reliſh the Joys of *naked* and *immortal* Spirits; it may be contempered to an *incorporeal* State ſo as to be able to enjoy it ſelf without *eating* and *drinking*, and live moſt happily upon the *Fare* of Angels, upon *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs*, and *Love* and *Contemplation*. And then by governing its *own* Will and Affections by the Laws of *Reaſon* and *Religion*, it may by degrees improve it ſelf ſo far in all theſe *Moral* Endowments, which are the *proper* Graces of every *reaſonable* Nature, as to be at laſt as perfectly *wiſe* and *reaſonable* in its own *Choices* and *Refuſals*, in its *Love* and *Hatred*, in its *Deſires* and *Delights*, as the *Angels* themſelves are. For though it cannot be expected that in this *imperfect* ſtate a *Soul* ſhould arrive to ſuch a Pitch as this, yet even now it may be *growing* up and *aſpiring* to it; which, if it doth, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, when *this* is *expired*, it hath *another* Life to live, which being antecedently prepared for by thoſe *ſpiritual* Improvements it hath made *here*, will furniſh it with Opportunites of *improving* infinitely faſter than *here* it did, or poſſibly could. For in that *Life* it ſhall not only be *freed* from thoſe many Incumbrances

which

which do *here* retard it in its *ſpiritual* Progreſs, nor ſhall it only be aſſociated with a World of *pure* and *bleſſed* Spirits, whoſe *holy* Example and *wiſe* Converſe will doubtleſs wonderfully edifie and improve it; but be alſo admitted into a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *God*, who is the *Author* and Pattern of all Perfection; the ſight of whoſe *raviſhing* Beauty will *inflame* it with a moſt *ardent* Love to him, and *excite* it to a moſt *vigorous* Imitation of him: All which conſidered, it is not to be imagined how much the ſtate of *Heaven* will immediately *improve* thoſe *happy* Souls that are prepared and diſpoſed for it. But then conſidering that *Moral Perfection* is as *infinite* as the *Nature* of *God*, in which there is an *Infinity* of *Holineſs* and *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* within this *boundleſs* Subject, there will be Room enough for Souls to make *farther* and *farther* Improvements in, even to *Eternity*. And then when they ſhall ſtill be growing on ſo faſt, and yet be ſtill *forever* improving, to what a *tranſcendent* Height of *Glory* and *Perfection* will they at laſt arrive? For tho no *finite* Soul can *ever* arrive to an *infinite* Perfection, yet ſtill it may be growing on to it, becauſe there will ſtill be *poſſible* Degrees of it beyond its *preſent* Attainments; and when it is arrived to the fartheſt *imaginable* Degree,

gree, yet ſtill it will be *capable* of farther, and ſo farther and farther to all *Eternity*. And if ſo, *O bleſſed God*, of what a *Capacious* Nature haſt thou made theſe *Souls* of ours, which tho they will doubtleſs *improve* in *Goodneſs* as faſt in the *other Life* as is poſſible for them, with all the Advantages of a *Heavenly* State, yet will never attain to an *utmoſt Period*, but ſtill be growing *perfecter* and *perfecter forever?*

3. The Soul of *Man* is of *vaſt* Worth in Reſpect of its *immenſe* Capacities of *Pleaſure* and *Delight:* For its Capacity of *Pleaſure* muſt neceſſarily be as *large* and *extenſive*, as its Capacity of *Underſtanding*, and of *Moral Perfection*; becauſe the *proper* Pleaſure of a Soul reſults from its own *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, from its *farther* Diſcoveries of *Truth*, and *farther* Proficiency in *inward* Rectitude and Vertue, and conſequently as at it Improves *farther* and *farther* in *Underſtanding* and in *Moral Perfection*, it muſt ſtill gather *more* and *more* Fuel to *feed* and *encreaſe* its *own* Joy and Pleaſure. For the Pleaſure of every Being conſiſts in the *vigorous* Exerciſe of its Faculties about *convenient* and *agreable* Objects; but the *Faculties* of a Soul are *Underſtanding* and *Will*, to which the only *agreable* Objects are *Truth* and *Goodneſs*; and therefore the more *Truth* there is in the *Mind*,

Mind, and the more *Goodneſs* there is in the *Will*, the more vigorouſly will they *imploy* and *exerciſe* themſelves about them, and conſequently the more they will be *pleaſed* and *raviſhed*. Since therefore, every *new* Diſcovery of *Truth*, and every *new* Degree of *Goodneſs* gives *new* Life to our *Minds* and *Wills*, and renders both more *ſprightly* and *vigorous*, it hence neceſſarily follows that our Souls are capable of as much *Pleaſure* as they are of *Truth* and *Goodneſs*; and how vaſtly *Capable* they are of both theſe I have already ſhewed you. So that it is not to be imagined by us, who have here ſo *little* Experience, what *Heavens* of Joy a Soul is *Capable* of; only at preſent we find by Experience that the more we improve in *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs*, the more *pleaſant* & *chearful* we find and feel *our ſelves*, and that our *Faculties* ſtill grow more *active* and *lightſom* the more we diſburthen them of that *Ignorance* and *Sin* that *cloggs* and *incumbers* them. And upon *great* Proficiencies in *Knowledge* and *Vertue* we find a *ſtrange* Alacrity within our ſelves; we are as it were in *Heaven* upon Earth, and do feel a *Paradiſe* ſpringing up within us, the *Fragrance* of whoſe *Joys* grows many times ſo *ſtrong* that our *frail* Mortality can hardly bear them. When therefore ſuch *Souls* do caſt *off* this Mortality which now doth

doth only fetter and intangle them, and have made their Entrance into the *inviſible* Regions of *Bleſſedneſs*, how *ſprightly* and *active*, how *lightſom* and *chearful* will they feel themſelves? For in the *firſt Moment* of their Admiſſion, all that *Miſt* of *erroneous* Prejudice which now interrupts their Proſpect of *Truth*, and all thoſe Remains of *irregular* Affection that check and diſtract them in their Choice of *Goodneſs*, will be *forever* chaſed from their *Minds* and *Wills* by the *clear* Light of the *Heavenly State*; and their Faculties having thus diſburthen'd themſelves, and ſhaken *off* every Clog, with what *unſpeakable* Vigour will they *move* and *act*, eſpecially in the Preſence of ſuch *ſuitable* Objects as the *Heavenly State* will preſent before them? When *infinite Truth*, and *infinite Goodneſs* ſhall be always preſent to their *free* Minds and undiſtracted Wills, and nothing ſhall *interpoſe* to hinder them either in ſeeing the *one*, or in choſing the *other*, here will be work enough for both to all *Eternity*; and both being freed from all Incumbrance, the *one* will be diſcovering every *Moment* farther and farther into that *infinite Truth* which it loves and admires, and the *other* will be improving every *Moment* more and more in that *infinite Goodneſs* which it chooſes and adores. And then every *new* Diſcovery and

and *new* Improvement will ſpring *new* Heavens of Joy in the Soul, and by reaſon of thoſe *new* Acqueſts of *Truth* and *Goodneſs*, which we ſhall every *Moment* make, we ſhall every *Moment* be entertained with *new* Pleaſures, and ſo before we have ſpent *one* Joy, *another* will ſucceed, and *another* that, and ſo on *forever*. For when a *God* of *infinite Truth* and *Goodneſs* becomes the *Objective Happineſs* of a *finite* Nature which cannot comprehend and enjoy him, but in an *infinite* Succeſſion, every *new* Delight the *Injoyment* of him creates in us muſt neceſſarily raiſe a *new* Deſire, and every *new* Deſire immediately *find* a *new* Delight, and ſo round again to all *Eternity*. Of what a *vaſt* Capacity therefore is this Soul of ours, in which there is room enough *ſucceſſively* to entertain all the *raviſhing* Joys and Pleaſures that make an *Everlaſting Heaven*; That can drink in thoſe *deep* Rivers of *Pleaſure* as faſt as they *ſpring* up and *flow* from God's right hand for evermore? What Tongue can expreſs the *innumerable* Joys that ſuch a Soul can hold, whoſe Capacity is ſo *large* as *Heaven*, and ſo *near* to *infinite* as to be able to contain all thoſe Joys and Pleaſures that *infinite Truth* and *Goodneſs* can create?

4. And laſtly, The Soul of Man is of *vaſt* Worth in Reſpect of its Capacity of *Immortality*

mortality. For by its Operations it is evident that the Soul is not compoſed of *Corruptible matter*, but is a *ſpiritual* and *immaterial* Subſtance; for if it were *Matter*, it would *act* and *move* only when *other* Matter preſſes upon it, and not be able to determine the Courſe of its *own* Motion, but would be forced to move *backwards* or *forwards* according as it was *thruſt* on by that *outward* Matter that continually moves and preſſes upon it, and all its Motions would be as *neceſſary* as that of a Stone in the *Air*, when it is thruſt up by an *impreſſed* Force, and *preſſed* down again by the weight of the *Air* above it: Whereas in this Soul of ours we ſenſibly *feel* and *experience* a *natural* Liberty of acting, a Power to move it ſelf and to determine its *own* Motions which way it pleaſeth; when it is preſſed *forward* never ſo vigorouſly by the *ſtrong* Impulſes of *outward* Objects, it is in its Power to *go on* or *retreat*, and to *divert* the Current of its Thoughts into a quite *contrary* Channel to that whereinto it is thruſt and directed by all the Impreſſions of its Senſe. For thus in the midſt of the *Alarums* and *Shoutings* of an *Army*, of the *Noiſes* of Drums and Trumpets ringing in our Ears, our Soul can recollect it ſelf, and reduce its *ſcattered* Thoughts into *profound* Contemplations of a *ſweet* and *Bleſſed* Peace;

and

and when it is *preſſed* from *without* with never ſo much Importunity to *this* or *that particular* Choice, it is in its Power to *reject* the Motion, and to *chooſe* the quite contrary. By all which it is *apparent* that the Soul hath an *innate* Liberty of *acting*, that *ſhe* is not *neceſſitated* from *without* by the *different* Concourſes and Motions of the *ſeveral* Particles of *Matter*; but that all the Diverſity of her *Wills* and *Opinions* is principally owing to her *own Freedom* and *Power* of ſelf-determination, and to make the *leaſt* doubt of it is to queſtion the *common* Senſe and Experience of Mankind. Since therefore the Soul is not determined in its Motions by the different *Preſſures* of *material* things as all *other* Matter is, but hath power to *ſwim* againſt the *Torrent*, and *move* quite counter to all *foreign* Impreſſions, it hence neceſſarily follows that it is *immaterial*. And indeed conſidering how much its *Operations* do exceed the *utmoſt* Power of *dull* and *paſſive* Matter, I cannot but wonder that any Man ſhould be ſo *forſaken* of his *Reaſon*, as to rank it among *material* Things; for how is it *poſſible* that a *Piece* of *dull unactive Matter*, that a *little* Graſs or Dirt, or Mire, after all the *Refinings*, *Macerations*, and *Maturations*, that can be *performed* by the help of *Motion* ſhould ever be able to make a *thinking* Being.

ing, or grow *up* into the Soul of a *Philoſopher?* That a Company of *dead Atoms*, which cannot move unleſs they are moved, can ever be *capable* of framing *Syllogiſms* in *Mood* and *Figure*, and diſputing *pro* and *con* whether they are *Atoms* or no? That ſuch *inert* and *ſluggiſh* Bodies ſhould by their *impetuous* joſtling together awaken *one another* out of their *ſenſeleſs* Paſſiveneſs, and make *each other* hear and feel their *mutual* Knockings and Joſtlings, and then from this *ſenſe* into which they have thus awakened *one another*, and (which they are as *incapable* of as a *Muſical Inſtrument* is of hearing its *own* Sounds, or taking pleaſure in the *harmonious* Aires that are playd upon it) ſhould proceed and conſult together to make *wiſe* Laws, and contrive the *beſt Models* of *Government*; to inveſtigate the Natures of *Things*, and deduce from them the *ſeveral Syſtems* of *Arts* and *Sciences*; in a word, how is it *poſſible* that a Company of *fluid* Motes and Particles of *Matter* ſhould ever be ſo artificially *complicated* and *twiſted* one with *another*, as to form an *Underſtanding* that can *lift* up its Eyes, and look beyond all this *ſenſible* World into that of *immaterial* Beings, and conceive *abſtracted Notions* of things which can never be *Objects* to any *material* Senſes; ſuch as a *pure* Point, *Equality* and *Proportion*; *Symmetry*,

try, and *Aſymmetry* of *Magnitudes*, the *Riſe* and *Propagation* of *Dimenſions*, *infinite Diviſibility*, and the *like* Notions that never were in *Matter*, nor conſequently could ever be extracted out of it: That can correct the *Errors* of all our *material* Perceptions, and demonſtrate Things to be vaſtly different from what they apprehend and report them; can *prove* the *Sun*, for inſtance, to be one *hundred* and *ſixty* times *bigger* than the *Earth*, when to our Eye and Imagination it appears no *bigger* than a Buſhel; that can lodg *within* it ſelf all that *Maſs* of *ſenſible* Things which taketh up ſo much Room *without* it, and when it hath piled them *up* upon *one another* in *vaſt* and moſt *prodigious* Numbers is ſtill as *capacious* of more, as when it was altogether *empty*; in a word, that can graſp the *Univerſe* with a *Thought*, and comprehend the *whole* Latitude of *Heaven* and *Earth* within its *own indiviſible* Center; how *ſenſeleſs* is it to imagine that ſuch *Noble* Operations as theſe can be performed by a *meer* Complex of *dead Atoms* and *ſenſeleſs* Particles of Matter? And if they cannot, as doubtleſs they cannot, then from hence it will neceſſarily follow that the Soul of Man is an *immaterial* Thing. Furthermore we ſee, that tho the Soul takes in *Objects* of all *ſizes*, yet when once they are *in*, they are not as *Bodies* in a

material Place in which the *Greater* take up more Room than the *Leſs*: For the *Thought* of a *Mile*, or ten thouſand Miles doth no more *fill* or *ſtretch* a *Soul*, than that of a *Foot* or an *Inch*, or a *Mathematical Point*; and whereas all *Matter* hath its *Parts*, and thoſe extended *one* without *another* into *Length* and *Breadth* and *Thickneſs*, and ſo is *meaſurable* by *Inches*, *Yards*, or *ſolid Meaſures*; there is no ſuch Thing as *meaſurable* Extenſion in any thing belonging to the Soul. For in *Cogitation* which is the *Eſſence* of a Soul, there is neither *Length*, nor *Breadth*, nor *Thickneſs*, nor is it *poſſible* to have any *Conceit* of a *Foot* of Thought, or a *Yard* of Reaſon, a *Pound* of *Wiſdom*, or a *Quart* of Vertue. And if what belongs to a Soul be *immaterial*, it will neceſſarily follow that the Soul it ſelf is *immaterial* too, and as ſuch *capable* of *Immortality*. For *immaterial* Natures being *pure* and *ſimple*, having neither *contrary* Qualities nor *diviſible* Parts in them, as *material* Things have, can have no Principles of *Alteration* and *Corruption* in them; and being *devoid* of theſe, they muſt needs be *capable* of *living* and *ſubſiſting for ever*. What *Noble* Beings therefore are the Souls of Men which, together with thoſe *vaſt* capacities of *Underſtanding*, of *Moral Perfection*, of *Joy* and *Pleaſure* are naturally *capable* of *Immortality*, and con-

conſequently of *improving* in *Knowledge*, in *Goodneſs*, and in *Joy* and *Pleaſure* unto all *Eternity*? And therefore certainly a Soul muſt needs be a moſt *precious* Thing, that can thus *out-live* all *ſublunary* Beings and *ſubſiſt for ever* in ſo *ſublime* a ſtate of *Glory* and *Beatitude*.

Having thus ſhewn you the *invaluable* Worth of the Soul in Reſpect of its *own natural* Capacities, I proceed

2. To ſhew you of what *vaſt* Eſteem it is in the Judgment of all thoſe, who we muſt needs ſuppoſe do beſt underſtand the *Worth* of it; and that is the *whole* World of *Spirits*. For to be ſure *Spirits* muſt *beſt* underſtand the Excellency of *Spirits*, becauſe they have a *clearer* In-ſight into *each* others Natures, and a more *immediate* Proſpect of the *Vertue*, *Power* and *Excellency* of *each* others *Faculties*. For as for us, whileſt we are in this *imbodied* ſtate, and do underſtand by *corporeal* Organs, we generally judge of the *Worth* and *Excellency* of Things by the Impreſſion they make upon our Senſes, and as theſe are *more* or *leſs* gratified and affected with them, we ſet a *higher* or *lower* Value upon them. Since therefore *Spirits* are a *ſort* of *Beings* that cannot touch or affect our *Bodily* Senſes, it is impoſſible we ſhould be *competent* Judges of the *true* Worth and Value of them; and there-

fore in this matter we ought to be guided by the Judgment of *Spirits*, who must needs be *supposed* to have a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *one anothers* Natures. And if we will be guided by these, we shall find the *whole* World of *Spirits*, even from the *highest* to the *lowest*, unanimously *rating* the Souls of Men at an *inestimable* Price and Value. And to make this appear, I shall shew you the *vast* Price there is set upon them.

1. By *God* the *Father*.
2. By *God* the *Son*.
3. By *God* the *Holy Ghost*.
4. By the *Holy Angels*.
5. By the *Devils*.

1. Let us Consider the *vast* Price which *God the Father* hath set upon Souls. For when he intended to form these *Noble* Beings, and transmit them into *terrestrial* Bodies, that so being compounded with a *sensitive* Nature they might clasp the *Spiritual* and *Animal* Worlds together; he being *sensible* of the *vast* Hazards and *infinite* Snares they would be *exposed* to, was so deeply concerned for their Preservation, that he thought nothing *too dear* to save and secure them. And *fore-seeing* their Fall from that *terrestrial* Happiness which he *originally* designed them, notwithstanding the *liberal* Care he had taken

ken to preſerve them in the *State* of *Innocence*, he deſigned to remove the *Scene* of their Happineſs from *Earth* to *Heaven*, being reſolved, if poſſible, to repair the Loſs of a *terreſtrial* with a *caleſtial* Paradiſe. For which end, inſtead of the *Covenant of Innocence* the *Bleſſings* whereof by their *Sin* they had *for ever* forfeited, he introduces the *Covenant* of *Repentance*, that ſo by the help of this Plank after their *general* Ship-wrack, they might be preſerved, and go ſafe to the *Shoar* of a *happy* Eternity, And that by this *Covenant* he might the more effectually recover them, he deſigned to grant it to them in ſuch a Way, and upon ſuch a *wiſe* and *weighty* Conſideration, as might at once affect them with the *greateſt* ſenſe of his *Love* and the *deepeſt* Awe of his *Severity*; that ſo whileſt by the *former* he *allured*, by the *later* he might *terrify* to Repentance: To which *end* he determined not to grant it to them upon any *other* Conſideration than that of *anothers* ſuffering for them, and *undergoing* the Puniſhment of their Sin in their ſtead; that ſo whilſt he ſhewed his *Love* to them in admitting *another* to *ſuffer* for them, he might expreſs his *Hatred* to their Sin in not Pardoning it without anothers ſuffering. And that he he might manifeſt *this* his *Love* to them, and *this* his *Hatred* to their *Sin* in the *higheſt*

Degree, as he admitted *another* to *ſuffer* for us ſo he reſolved to accept no *meaner* Suffering than that of his *own beloved* Son. And that *this* his *ſuffering* might be the more *effectual*, he *propoſed* to ſend him down to us into this *lower* World *cloathed* in our Natures, that ſo he might not only the more familiarly *inſtruct* us by his *Doctrine* and *Example*, but the more exactly *perſonate* us in *undergoing* the Puniſhment of our Sin; and upon his undertaking to undergo it, the moſt *Merciful* Father agreed to this *Covenant* of *Mercy*, by which he obliged himſelf to receive us into his Favour upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, and *impower'd* his Son to govern us according to the Tenour of it, that is, to *Crown* us with the *Rewards* of it if we Repented, and *inflict* on us the *Puniſhments* of it if we went on in our Impenitence. And that there might be nothing wanting to render this Government of his Son *ſucceſful* and us *obedient* to it, he alſo agreed upon *this* his *Mighty* undertaking to *ſubſtitute* to him the *Holy Ghoſt* to be the *ſupreme* Miniſter of his Government that ſo by the *Agency* of this *vicarious* Power he might *bow* and *incline* the Hearts of Men to ſubmit unto him, and comply with the Terms of this *Merciful* Covenant in which their *everlaſting* Welfare is ſo abundantly provided for.

This

This is the *mighty* Project which, for the ſake of the Souls of Men, the Father of *Spirits* hath contrived, and upon which he hath acted and proceeded even from their *firſt* Fall to this very *Moment*; And by this he hath moſt plainly *expreſſed* the *high* and great Veneration that he hath of them; for doubtleſs had they not been exceeding *precious* in his Eyes, he would never have thought it worth the while to project and act, ſuch *mighty* Things to redeem and ſave them: He would rather have left them to their *own* Fate, and not have concerned himſelf about them, or not have concerned himſelf to that Degree as to make them the *Subjects* of ſuch a *vaſt* Deſign. For all *wiſe* Agents meaſure their Deſigns by the *Worth* and *Value* of the Things they aim at, and do never lay *great* Projects for the ſake of *little* Trifles; and unleſs *God* had a *mighty* Value for the Souls of Men, his making ſuch *vaſt* Preparations to ſave them would be like that *fooliſh* Emperors raiſing a *numerous* Army, only to go and gather Cockle-ſhells.

2. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which *God the Son* hath ſet upon Souls; For it is plain he valued them at that *mighty* Rate, as that for their ſakes he willingly undertook to execute this *vaſt* Deſign of his *Father*, and that to ſave theſe *precious* Beings he thought

it would be very well worth his while to come down from *Heaven* and *vail* his *Divinity* in our *Natures*, to put on the *Form* of a Servant and make himſelf of no Reputation; to *live* a *Miſerable* Life, and *die*, a *painful* and *accurſed* Death. And can we *think* he would ever have layd down ſo *vaſt* a Price, as his *Glory* and *Happineſs*, his *Life* and *Blood* amounts to for Things of a *mean* and *inconſiderable* Value? Had he ſo *low* an Eſteem of his Father's Boſom, and his own *Heavenly* Glory as to *part* with them for *Trifles*? Such *ſlight* Apprehenſions of *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Pain* and *Miſery*, as to caſt himſelf into them for the ſake of *Beings* he had *little* or *no* Eſteem of? Could any thing but what is *ineſtimable* countervail that *Glory* he *parted* with, and that *Miſery* he indured? Or, can you think thoſe Souls of *little* Worth which the *Son of God* thought *worth* his dying for? No certainly, if we knew nothing of our Souls but this, that the *Son of God* thought them a *good* Purchaſe at the *dear* Price of his *Bliſs*, his *Glory*, and his *Blood*; yet from thence we have *infinite* Reaſon to conclude them moſt *precious* and *ineſtimable* Beings, it being *impoſſible* that he who doth ſo perfectly underſtand the *Worth* and *Value* of Things, ſhould ever be ſo *over-ſeen* as to *pay* ſo *vaſt* a Sum for *ſlight* and cheap Commodities.

3. Let

3. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which *God the Holy Ghoſt* hath ſet upon Souls; For 'tis for their ſakes that he doth ſo Induſtriouſly operate in the Kingdom of our *Saviour*, that he takes ſo much pains in it, as he doth and hath always done, ever ſince it was *firſt* erected, to drive on that *bleſſed* Deſign of making the Souls of Men, *the native ſubjects of it* happy. It is upon their Account that he hath made ſo *many* Revelations of God's Will to the World, and confirmed them by ſo *many* Miracles, that ſo he might extricate thoſe *precious* Beings out of thoſe Labyrinths of Error in which they had involved and loſt themſelves, and direct them into the way to *true* Happineſs. And it is for their good that he ſtill continues ſhedding forth his *Heavenly* Influences upon them, that he ſtill inſpires them with ſo many *good* Thoughts, importunes them with ſuch *urgent* Motives, preſſes upon them with ſuch *earneſt* Struglings and *vigorous* Efforts, not only of his *preventing* but of his *aſſiſting* Grace too, that if *poſſible* he may awaken them into a Senſe of their Danger, and excite and quicken them to purſue the Methods of their *own* Safety and Happineſs. So infinitely *jealous* is this *bleſſed Spirit* leſt theſe *precious* Beings ſhould Miſcarry, that tho one would think them ſufficiently *ſafe-guarded* in their

their Voyage through this *dangerous* Sea under the Convoy of their *own* Reaſon, yet he dares not truſt them to themſelves, but bears them Company all along, and keeps a watchful Eye over them, and when any Rock is nigh he warns them of it, and when they are beſet with *evil* Spirits, thoſe *miſchievous Pirates* that lie in wait to Captivate and *Inſlave* them, he preſently comes into their Aſſiſtance, and, unleſs they are reſolved to betray themſelves, always brings them *off* victoriouſly. Nay, tho they many times not only yield to theſe *Piratical Spirits*, but joyn their Forces with them to reſiſt and beat *off* their *merciful* Friend and Deliverer, yet he doth not therefore preſently abandon them, but being infinitely concerned for their Reſcue follows them even to the Mouth of the Enemies Harbour with his *bleſſed* Motions and Importunities, and never gives over the Purſuit of them till he hath either actually recovered, or left them paſt all Hopes of Redemption. And when he ſees that they are utterly loſt by their *own* Madneſs and Folly, and that it is in vain to follow them any farther, he caſts a *ſorrowful* Look upon them, and like a *grieved* Friend after the *utmoſt* ſtrugglings and *extream* Efforts of his *affronted* Goodneſs, unwillingly leaves them to their own *ſad* Fate, and gives them *up* as it were

were with the Tears in his Eyes. And can you think this *bleſſed Spirit* would be ſo *induſtrious* as he is in his Miniſtry for Souls, that he would take ſuch *infinite* Pains to ſave them, be ſo extreamly *urgent* and *ſolicitous* for their Welfare, if He did not know them to be a ſort of Beings of an *ineſtimable* Worth and Value? *O bleſſed God*, what are not our Souls *worth*, that are worth all the Pains thy *bleſſed Spirit* takes to ſave, and make them *happy!* That not only *thou* thought'ſt *worth* all thoſe *vaſt* Thoughts and Counſels, which thou haſt ſpent upon them; that not only thy *Son* thought *worth* all thoſe *vaſt* Condeſcentions he ſtooped *to* to put thoſe Thoughts in Execution; but thy *bleſſed Spirit* alſo thinks *worth* all that *unwearied* Pains and Endeavour, all that *inceſſant* Care and Importunity which he employs about them to ſave and reſcue them from Sin and Miſery? Doubtleſs thoſe Beings muſt needs be exceeding *precious*, for whoſe Safety and Welfare all the *bleſſed Trinity* are ſo unſpeakably concerned.

4. Let us conſider the *vaſt* Price which the *Holy Angels* put upon Souls: For tho they are the Crown and Top of all the Creation of *God*, and do by their *eſſential* Perfections border *neareſt* upon him, yet ſuch is their Opinion of the Souls of Men that they think it no Diſparagement to converſe with and

and miniſter to them; but from the begining of the World till now have been always ready to maintain a *cloſe* Intercourſe and *intimate* Correſpondence with them; and ſo far forth as they are permitted by the Laws of their *inviſible* World they are continually attending to ſtretch forth a *helping* Hand to them in all their Needs and Neceſſities. Tho they are the moſt *Illuſtrious* Courtiers of *Heaven*, yet they diſdain not to be the *Life-Guards* of Souls, *to pitch their Tents round about them*, as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it, *Pſal.* 34. 8. And interpoſe between them and their Danger; to prompt them *to*, and aſſiſt them *in* their Duties; to ſtrengthen them againſt, or to remove their Temptations; to comfort them in their Sorrows, and chaſe away from them thoſe *malignant Spirits* that are always about them watching all Opportunities to ſeduce and deſtroy them. Hence *Heb.* 1 14. They are ſaid to be *miniſtring*, *Spirits ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation.* And how much they are concerned for the Safety and Welfare of theſe *precious* Beings they are charged with is evident by that Paſſage, *Luke* 15. 16. *There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* So *Conſiderable* are the Lives of Souls to the *Angels* of *God*, that tho they are always entertained with the moſt

moſt *raviſhing* Pleaſures, yet *Heaven* it ſelf cannot divert them from being overjoyed at the Repentance of a *Periſhing* Soul, and celebrating its Recovery with a *new* Feſtival. And when-ever the *happy* News is brought them that ſuch a *dying* Soul is revived, they not only attend to it in the *midſt* of all their Joys and Triumphs, but upon the hearing of it they ſhout for Joy, and fill the Heavens with a *new* Acclamation. And when-ever ſuch a *Penitent* Soul hath bidden adieu to the Body, thoſe *bleſſed* Spirits ſtand ready to recieve and guard it through thoſe *Legions* of *malignant Spirits* that do always infeſt theſe *lower* Tracts of Air, and to conduct it ſafe to thoſe *happy* Abodes where it is to lodge till the Reſurrection; for it is ſaid of *Lazarus*'s Soul, *Luke* 16. 22. *That it was carried by Angels into* Abraham's *Boſom.* All which is a *clear* Demonſtration of the *vaſt* Eſteem which thoſe *bleſſed Angels* have of Souls. For can it be thought that ſuch *noble* Beings who have a *God* and themſelves to converſe with, and have ſo *immediate* a Proſpect both of *his* Beauty and their *own* to exerciſe their Faculties and employ their Contemplation, would be ſo *ready* and *willing* as they are to attend upon Souls, and miniſter to their Safety and Happineſs, if they had not a *mighty* Value and Eſtimation of them? Surely if theſe *immortal*

mortal Spirits within us were not unſpeakably *dear* and *precious*, thoſe *Angelical* Beings who have always the moſt *ſublime* and *enraviſhing* Objects before them to employ and entertain their Faculties, would never have thought it *worth the while* to ſtickle ſo zealouſly in their Affairs, and concern themſelves ſo much about them. And thus our *Saviour* himſelf argues, *Mat.* 18. 10. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you that in Heaven their Angels do behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven*; that is, do not undervalue any Soul; for how *mean* or *little* ſoever ſome of them may appear to you, they are under the *Guardianſhip* of thoſe *bleſſed* Angels that are the Courtiers of *God*, and do always attend upon his *Majeſtick* Preſence.

5. And *Laſtly*, Let us conſider the vaſt Price which the *Devils* themſelves do put upon Souls; for ever ſince thoſe *malignant* Spirits through their *own* Pride and Ambition revolted from *God*, and conſpir'd to make War with *Heaven*, and revenge their Expulſion thence, the *conſtant* Drift of all their Deſigns and Actions hath been to ſeduce and ruin them, being conſcious that of all the Beings that are within the reach of their Power, there are none ſo *dear* to *God* as theſe, and that by ſeducing from him theſe his moſt *precious* Creatures,

tures, they ſhall do him the *greateſt* ſpight and moſt effectually revenge upon him their *own* Damnation. For doubtleſs were there any Beings below the Moon more *dear* to *God* than theſe, they would bend their Force and Malice againſt them, and not make theſe as they do, the *only* Centers of their *miſchievous* Activity. Had they any *nobler* Game to fly at, their *ambitious* Malice would diſdain to ſtoop to the Quarry of Souls; but becauſe of all others Theſe are the *nobleſt* and beſt *worth* the ruining, therefore do theſe *malignant* Spirits turn all their Artillery upon them, and level all their *fiery* Darts againſt them. And how *ambitious* they are of ſeducing our Souls, and training them on to Perdition, is evident by the *infinite* Wiles, and Snares, and Stratagems they contrive againſt them; by their *unwearied* Diligence to watch all Opportunities againſt them; to ſurprize them where they are *careleſs*, and aſſault them where they are *weakeſt*, and cheat them with *diſguiſed* Suggeſtions; to inſpect their Humours, and apply themſelves to their Intereſt, and nick their Tempers, with convenient *Temptations*. And if after all their Labour, Craft, and Contrivance they can but ſeiſe the Game they hunt for, the Blood of a Soul is ſo *rich* a Draught that they think it a *ſufficient* Recompence for all their

their *painful* and *miſchievous* Devices; for St. *Peter* tells us that *they go about like roaring Lyons, ſeeking whom they may devour.* And to be ſure thoſe *malignant* Spirits would never be ſo impertinently *miſchievous*, as to ſpend their time in catching Flies, and did they not know our Souls to be *noble* Preys, they would never go ſo far about as they do, nor take ſo much Care and Pains to Catch and inſnare them. So that from their *unwearied* Diligence to ſeduce and ruin us, we may moſt certainly conclude either that they are very *fooliſh* Devils, or that our Souls are very *precious* Beings; but howſoever, their Diligence to deſtroy them is a *plain* Argument that they eſteem them *precious*, it being by no means to be ſuppoſed, that ſuch *Wiſe* and *intelligent* Beings as they are would ſo much concern themſelves, as they do, about things which they had *little*, or *no* Eſteem for.

And thus you ſee at what a *vaſt* Rate our Souls are valued by the whole World of Spirits, how from the *higheſt* to the *loweſt*, thoſe *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Judges of the *juſt* Worth of Souls do all unanimouſly concur in a *great* and *high* Eſtimation. So that whether we value them by their own *natural* Capacities, or by the Eſtimation of thoſe who are beſt able to judg of their Worth and Excellency, we have *abundant* Reaſon to conclude them moſt

moſt *precious* and *ineſtimable* Beings. And now I ſhall conclude this Argument with ſome Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, by what it is that we ought to value our ſelves, and eſtimate the Dignity of *our own* Natures, *viz.* by our *rational* and *immortal* Souls, thoſe *excellent* Beings that are ſo *invaluable* in themſelves, and ſo highly eſteemed by the *beſt* and *wiſeſt* Judges. 'Tis this *intelligent* and *immortal* Nature within us, that is the Crown and Flower of our Beings; 'tis by this that we are exalted above the Level of *meer* Animals; by this that we are allyed to Angels, and do border upon *God* himſelf: And he that values himſelf by any thing but his Soul, and thoſe things which are its *proper* Graces and Ornaments, begins at the *wrong* End of himſelf, forgets his Jewels, and eſtimates his Eſtate by his Lumber. And yet, *good God*, what *fooliſh* Meaſures do the Generality of Men take of themſelves? Were we not forced by *too* many *woful* Experiments, it would be hard to imagine that any Creature that believes a *rational* and *immortal* Soul to be a Part of its Nature, ſhould be ſo *ridiculous* as to value it ſelf, by the *little trifling* Advantages of a *well-coloured* Skin, a ſuit of fine Cloths, a Puff of popular Applauſe, or a *few* Baggs of *white* and *red* Earth; and yet,

God help us, theſe are the only things almoſt by which we value and difference our ſelves from others. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour; he, alas, is a *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little*, *creeping*, *deſpicable* Thing, not worthy to be looked upon, or taken notice of by ſuch a one as you. Why in the Name of God, what is the Matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath not he a Soul as well as you? a Soul that is *capable* to live as long, and to be as *happy* as yours? Yes, yes, 'tis true indeed; but notwithſtanding, *God* be thanked, you are another-gueſs Man than he; for you have a much *handſomer* Body, your Apparel is much more *fine* and *faſhionable*, you live in a more *ſplendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Purſe to maintain it, and your Name *forſooth*, is more in Vogue, and makes a far *greater* Noiſe in the World. And is this all the Difference between your *mighty* ſelves and your *pitiful* Neighbours? Alas poor Men! A few Days more will put an End to this, and when your rich Attires are reduced to a *Winding-ſheet*, and all your *vaſt* Poſſeſſions to *ſix Foot of Earth*, what will become of all thoſe little Trifles by which you value your ſelves? Where will be the *Beauty* or *Wealth*, the *Port* or *Garb*, which you are

now

now ſo *proud* of? Alas! Now that *lovely* Body looks as *pale* and *ghaſtly*, that *lofty* Soul is left as bare, as poor and naked as your deſpiſed Neighbours. Should you now meet his *wandering Ghoſt* in the *wide* World of Spirits, what would you have to boaſt of more than he, now your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vaniſhed, and all your *outward* Pomp and Splendor ſhrouded in the *Horrors* of a *ſilent* Grave? Now you will have nothing diſtinguiſh you from the moſt *Contemptible*, unleſs you have *wiſer* and *better* Souls, and by ſo much as you were more *reſpected* for your *Beauty* and *Wealth*, your *Garb* and *Equipage* in this World, by ſo much you will be more *deſpiſed* for your *Pride* and *Inſolence*, your *Covetouſneſs* and *Senſuality* in the other. Let us therefore learn to value our ſelves by that which will abide by us, by our *immortal* Souls and by thoſe *heavenly* Graces which do *adorn* and *accompliſh* them; by our *Humility* and *Devotion*, by our *Charity* and *Meekneſs*, by our *Temperance* and *Juſtice*; all which are ſuch *Preheminences*, as will ſervive our Funerals, and diſtinguiſh us from *baſe* and *abject* Souls forever. But for a *rational* and *immortal* Creature to *prize* it ſelf by any ſuch *temporary* Advantages is altogether as vain and ridiculous, as it was for the Emperor *Nero*

to value himſelf for being an *excellent* Fidler.

2ly. From hence alſo I infer how much we are obliged to live up to the Dignity of our Natures. Should a *ſtranger* to Mankind be admitted into this *buſy* Stage of *humane* Affairs, to ſurvey our Actions, and the *paltry* Deſigns we drive at, certainly he would hardly imagine that we believed our ſelves to be ſuch a noble ſort and ſtrain of Beings as we are. If you ſaw a Man ſeriouſly imploying himſelf in ſome *ſordid* and *beggarly* Drudgery, could you imagine that he believed himſelf to be the Son of a King, and the Heir of a Crown? And when it is ſo *apparent* that the *main* of our Deſign is to prog for our Fleſh, and make a *comfortable* Proviſion for a few Years Eaſe and Luxury, who would think that we believed our ſelves to be *immortal* Spirits that muſt live *forever* in an *inconceivable* Happineſs or Miſery? When we conſider the high Rank which we hold in the Creation, the *vaſt* Capacities which there are in our Natures, and the *noble* Ends which we were made and deſigned for, are we not aſhamed to think how *poorly* we proſtitute our ſelves, and vilify *our own* Faculties by the *ſordid* Drudgeries wherein we exerciſe and imploy 'em? When we think what a Reputation we have

have throughout all the World of Spirits, what a *vaſt* Rate we are valued at by *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, are we not confounded to think how we *under-value* our ſelves by thoſe *low* and *inglorious* Ends, which we purſue and aim at? *O good God*, that thou ſhould'ſt give me a Soul of an *immortal* Nature, a Soul that is *big* enough for all the Joys which thy *everlaſting Heaven* is compoſed of, and I be ſuch a Wretch to my ſelf, ſuch a Traytor to the Dignity of my *own* Nature, as to give *up* my ſelf and all my Faculties to the Purſuit of ſuch *vain* and *wretched* Trifles? That I who am akin to Angels, ſhould make my ſelf a *Muck-worm*, and chuſe *Nebuchadnezzar*'s fate to leave Crowns and Scepters, and live among the *ſalvage* Herds of the Wilderneſs? That having ſuch a *great* and *noble* Nature, I ſhould content my ſelf to live like a Beaſt, and aim no *higher* than if I had been born only to eat, and drink, and ſleep, and wake for *thirty* or *forty* Years together, and then retire into a *ſilent* Grave, and be *inſenſible* forever? Wherefore in the Name of *God*, let us at laſt remember what we are, and what we are born to. Let us conſider, that we have Faculties that are *capable* of exerting themſeves *for ever* in the moſt *inraviſhing* Contemplation, and Love of the *eternal*

Fountain of Truth and Goodneſs; of copying and tranſcribing his moſt *adorable* Perfections, his *Wiſdom*, *Goodneſs*, *Purity*, and *Juſtice*, from whence the *infinite* Happineſs of his Nature derives; and thereby of glorifying us into *living* Images of *God*, and rendring us *like* him both in Beauty and Happineſs; in a word, that we have Faculties to converſe with Angels and with bleſſed Spirits, to bear a Part in the *eternal* Comfort of their Joys and Praiſes, and to reliſh all thoſe *unknown* Delights of which their *everlaſting Heaven* doth conſiſt. And having ſuch *great* and *noble* Powers in us, is it not a *burning* ſhame that they ſhould be always condemned to an *endleſs* Purſuit of Shadows and Impertinencies? Let us therefore rouſe up our ſelves, and ſhake off this *ſordid* and *degenerate* Temper that ſinks and depreſſes us, and makes us act ſo infinitely *unbecoming* the Dignity of our *immortal* Natures. And ſince we are deſcended from and deſigned for the *Heavenly Family*, let us learn to demean our ſelves upon Earth, as becomes the Natives of *Heaven*. Let us diſdain all *baſe* and *ſordid*, all *low* and *unworthy* Ends of Action, as Things beneath our *illuſtrious* Rank and Station in the World of Beings, and live in a *continual* Tendency towards, and Preparation for that

that *Heavenly State* which is the *proper* Orb and Sphere of our Natures.

3*ly.* From hence alſo I infer how much they undervalue themſelves, that ſell their Souls for the Trifles of this World. For ſince we know before-hand that the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven* againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs of Men, and he hath plainly aſſured us that our Souls muſt ſmart *for ever* for our Sins, it neceſſarily follows, that when ever we knowingly ſuffer our ſelves to be inticed into Sin, we make a *wilful* Forfeiture of our Souls. He that knows that ſuch a Draught, however *ſweetned* and made *palatable*, is yet compounded with the Juice of *deadly Night-ſhade*, and notwithſtanding that will have the *poiſonous* Draught, is wilfully bent to Murder and Deſtroy himſelf. And when we ſee that the Pleaſure of our Sin draws after it the Ruin of our Souls, and yet will Sin notwithſtanding, we do in effect ſtake our Souls againſt it, and with our Eyes open, make this *deſperate* Bargain, that upon Condition we may injoy ſuch a *ſinful* Pleaſure, we will willingly ſurrender *up* our *immortal* Spirits to the Pains of an *endleſs* and *intollerable* Damnation. And if ſo, *O bleſſed God*, how do the Generality of Men depreciate and undervalue themſelves? For

how often do we ſee Men in their *little* Frauds and Cozenages, ſell their Souls for a Penny gain; in their *laſcivious* and *intemperate* Humours, barter their Souls for a Moments Mirth or Pleaſure; in their *ambitious* Projects and Deſigns, part with their Souls for a Blaſt of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noiſe. For in every Temptation to Sin the Devil cheapens our *immortal* Souls, bids ſo much *Pleaſure*, or ſo much *Profit* for them; and in every Compliance with the Temptation we take his Offer, and ſtrike the *fatal* Bargain; So that if we will Sin, we had need Sin for ſomething ſince we muſt pay ſo dearly for it. But alas! there is no Proffer the Devil can make us, that is a *tolerable* Price for the Blood of our Souls; though he ſhould offer us the *whole* World for it, our *Saviour* aſſures us that he would bid us infinitely to our Loſs; and if ſo, what *wretched* Sales do we make of our Souls, when we Sin for Trifles, *lie* and *cheat* to get a Penny, conſent to a *wicked* Motion for a Pleaſure that will wither while we are ſmelling to it, and expire in the very Injoyment? For ſo much we value our Souls at, and do in effect declare, that in our Eſteem theſe *precious* Beings, which *God* and *Angels* ſet ſo high a Price on, are worth no more than what that

Profit

Profit or *Pleaſure*, for which we Sin, amounts to. *O good God!* What *cheap* and *worthleſs* Things then are our Souls in our Eſteem, who ſell and barter them every Day for ſuch *mean* and *worthleſs* Trifles? How do we part with our *Gold* for *Droſs*, and exchange our *Jewels* for *Pebbles*? What *ſordid* Thoughts, what *wretched vile* Opinions have we of our ſelves, that are ſo ready upon all Occaſions to ſell our ſelves for nought, or, which is next to nought, for the *ſorry* Proffers of every *baſe* and *infamous* Luſt? O would to God we would at laſt make but a *juſt* Eſtimate of our ſelves, and thereupon reſolve, as it is moſt *reaſonable* we ſhould, never to comply with any *ſinful* Motion, till we can get more by it than our Souls are worth, and then I am ſure we ſhould be *for ever* Deaf to all the Proffers which the *Devil* or *World* can make us.

4*ly*. And *laſtly*, from hence alſo I infer how much we are obliged above all things to take Care of our Souls: For ſince they are Beings of ſuch *vaſt* Capacities in themſelves, and of ſuch an *high* Eſtimation in the World of Spirits, methinks we ſhould all be convinced that to take leave of their Welfare, and prevent their *everlaſting* Miſcarriage, is the *higheſt* Concern and

and Intereſt of a Man. And yet, *God* forgive us, if we conſult the *common* Practice of Mankind, we ſhall find that there is ſcarce any thing in which we have any Intereſt at all, that is more *ſlighted* and *diſregarded* by us. Our Body is the Darling that hath our Hearts, and takes *up* all our Care and Thoughts; and to entertain its Appetite, and accommodate it with Pleaſures and Conveniencies, there is no Expence either of Labour or Time grudged, or thought much of; but as for the Soul, that *precious* and *immortal* Thing which will be living and perceiving *unſpeakable* Pleaſures or Pains when this Body is *dead* and *inſenſible*, that is overlooked as a Thing not *worthy* our *ſerious* Notice or Regard. And though we cannot but be *ſenſible* how much it is diſeaſed in all its Faculties, how much its *Underſtanding* is *overloaded* with *Error* and *Ignorance*, its *Will* feſtered with *unreaſonable* Malice and Obſtinacy, and its *Conſcience* oppreſſed with Loads of Guilt *ſufficient* to ſink it to the *nethermoſt* Hell; yet we ſeem for the Generality to be no more concerned at it; than if its Ruin or Recovery were equally indifferent to us. We can ſee it periſhing before our Eyes, without any Remorſe or Compaſſion; we can paſs Day after Day without making the

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leaſt Offer or Attempt to recover it, without offering *up* a Prayer for it, or entertaining a *ſerious* Thought what will become of it *for ever*. O *inſenſible* Creatures that we are, thus to neglect and abandon the moſt *precious* Part of our ſelves! The Part that makes us Men, and by which alone we are *capable* of being *happy* or *miſerable for ever*. Let me therefore beſeech and conjure you, even by all that is *ſacred* and *ſerious*, by every thing that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by your *beſt* Hopes, and the moſt *important* Concern of your *everlaſting* Fate, to take pity upon your *periſhing* Souls, to conſider the *amazing* Dangers whereunto you have expoſed them, and to conſult the Means of their Recovery; to prick and affect your Hearts with the Senſe and Conſideration of their *impending* Ruin, till you have forced them to cry out *what ſhall we do to be ſaved*; to bath their Wounds with the Tears of Repentance, and to pour into them that moſt *ſovereign* Balm of a *ſerious* Purpoſe and Reſolution of Amendment; to pray earneſtly for them, and keep a *continual* Guard about them, and to ſtrive vigorouſly with thoſe *ſinful* Inclinations that threaten to ſink and ruin them. And if we will be but *content* to undergo theſe *neceſſary* Cares and Pains to ſecure them, we ſhall be ſure when they leave

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these Bodies to reap the Fruits of all in the Possession of an unspeakably *happy* and *glorious* Eternity.

II. I proceed now to the Second Proposition contained in these Words, *that our precious Souls may be lost.* And this our *Saviour* here plainly supposes, *If he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul.* The *Greek* Word is ζημιωθῇ, which properly signifies to receive a Mulct, or to suffer Damage; and therefore it is here opposed to κερδήσῃ, *if he shall gain.* So that the Word doth not denote the *absolute* Loss or Extinction of the Soul, but its undergoing some *dreadful* Mulct, or suffering some *irreparable* Damage. For as *Hierocles* hath observed ὡς εἶναι τε ἀθανάτῳ οὐσίᾳ θανάτου μοίρας μεταλαχεῖν, ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσεως, ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ εὖ εἶναι ἀποτρώσεως. *Immortal Substances cannot so die as to lose their Being, but so, as to lose their Well-being they may.* And accordingly our *Saviour* himself calls the Punishment of the Wicked in Hell Fire, destroying them, *Mat.* x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body --- but fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Where by *destroying*, he doth not mean putting a *final* End to their Being, but putting them into an *irrecoverable* State of Ill-being; for in this State of Destruction, they

still

ſtill continue to act, to *weep* and *wail*, and *gnaſh their Teeth*, as *Chriſt* elſewhere tells us, *Mat.* xiii, 42. which Actions plainly ſuppoſe their Continuance in Being, though in a moſt *wretched* and *deplorable* Ill-being. So that by the Loſs of the Soul here is not meant the Deſtruction of its Being, but its being expoſed to an *irreparable* Damage in the *other* World. And to prove that in this Senſe a Soul may be loſt, I ſhall endeavour theſe two Things.

Firſt, To ſhew you what Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World.

Secondly, Upon what Accounts it is *liable* to, and in Danger of them.

I. What Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World. To which I anſwer, that there is a *ſeven-fold* Damage whereunto the Soul of Man may be expoſed *hereafter*.

1*ſt*. It is *liable* to be deprived of the *higheſt* Happineſs it is capable of.

2*ly*. It is *liable* to the moſt *dreadful* Puniſhment and Correction of the Father of Spirits.

3*ly*. It is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of Devils, and *other malignant* Spirits.

4*ly*. It is *liable* to be confined to the moſt *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes.

5*ly*. It

5*ly.* It is *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *croſs*, *wild*, and *furious* Paſſions.

6*ly.* It is *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguiſh of its own *guilty* Conſcience.

7*ly.* It is *liable* to indure all theſe *diſmal* Things *for ever.*

1*ſt.* The Soul of Man is *liable* to be deprived of the *higheſt* Happineſs it is *capable* of. The *higheſt* Happineſs that a Soul is *capable* of is to enjoy *God*, that is, to *know*, and *love*, and *reſemble* him; and to be admitted into the *noble* Society of thoſe *pure*, and *bleſſed* Spirits that do thus enjoy him; of all which Happineſs a Soul may be *for ever* deprived by its own *vicious* and *depraved* Temper. For beſides that by ſuch a Temper it may provoke the *juſt* and *holy* God, who hath the Diſpoſal of the fate of Souls, to deprive it of, and baniſh it from this Happineſs *for ever*; it may thereby alſo utterly *incapacitate* it ſelf from ever enjoying it; it may promote and raiſe that Temper to ſuch a Degree of *Averſation* and *Antipathy* to *God*, and *canker* it into ſuch an *inveterate* Enmity to all the Perfections of his Nature, as that at laſt it may be utterly *incapable* of any ſuch *beatifical* Knowledg of them, as can any ways incline it to love and imitate him: For the *Apoſtle* tells us, that *the carnal*

nal Mind is enmity to God, Rom. viii. 7. From whence it is evident, that in every Degree of Sin, there is a Degree of Averſation to *God*, which Averſation may be improved into ſuch an *implacable* Malice againſt him, as that our Knowledg of him, inſtead of *endearing* him to us, or ingaging us to imitate him, may only *avert* us from, *provoke*, and *irritate* us againſt him, and by preſenting to us thoſe *immenſe* Perfections, for which he deſerves our *deareſt* Love, and *deepeſt* Adoration, may only fill our Minds with the *greater* Rage and more *invincible* Horror. And when the Soul is arrived to ſuch a Degree of Malignity againſt *God*, it is as *impoſſible* for it to injoy him, as to be *recreated* with Torment, or delighted with the Objects of its own *Antipathies*. And for the ſame Reaſon alſo it muſt be *incapable* of enjoying the Society of *bleſſed Spirits*, becauſe it hath acquired a Temper that is infinitely *repugnant* to their *Heavenly Genius*; ſo that if ſuch a *prejudiced* Soul ſhould, when it is arrived into *Eternity*, find the Gates of *Heaven* open to receive it, it would doubtleſs be ſo offended at every thing that is *Heavenly*, ſo ſtartled at the Sight of *God*, and the Diſplays of his *hated* Perfections, and ſeized with ſuch a Horror againſt thoſe *god-like* Beings that dwell there, and are perpetually

perpetually *contemplating* and *adoring*, *loving* and *imitating* him, that it would fly away of its *own* Accord from that *blisful* Habitation, as Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Day, and rather chuſe to baniſh it ſelf into *eternal* Darkneſs and Deſpair, than be ſhut up *for ever* in a *Heaven* ſo infinitely *repugnant* to its Nature. And certainly to be thus excommunicated from the *ſupreme* Happineſs of *our* Natures, and be forced to live in *everlaſting* Exile from *God* and *bleſſed* Spirits, and wander about like *wretched* Vagabonds that are chaſed and driven from all Hopes of Contentment, will be *unſpeakable* Damage to our Souls.

2*ly*. The Soul of Man is *liable* to the moſt *dreadful* Puniſhment and Correction of the *Father of Spirits*. There is no Doubt but *ſpiritual* Agents can ſtrike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and though we who are Spectators only of *corporeal* Action cannot diſcern the Manner how *one* Spirit acts upon *another*, yet there is no Reaſon to Doubt of the thing; and if there be ſuch a *mutual* Communication of Action between them, there is no Doubt but they can mutually make *each other* feel each others Pleaſures and Diſpleaſures; and if ſo, then it is only to ſuppoſe that the *leſs powerful* Spirits are ſubject to the *violent* Im-

Impreſſion, of the *more powerful* ones, and conſequently that all *finite* Spirits are liable to the Laſh of an *infinite* one; for why ſhould it be more *difficult* for the Father of our Spirits to correct our Spirits, than it is for the Parents of our Fleſh to correct our Fleſh? For though our Souls are no more *impreſſible* with *material* Stripes than Sunbeams are with the blows of a Hammer, yet are they liable to *horrid* and *diſmal* Thoughts, and to be as much pained and aggrieved by them, as our Bodies are by the moſt *exquiſite* Torments. So that if *God* be diſpleaſed with us, he can imprint his Wrath upon our Minds in *black* and *ghaſtly* Thoughts, and cauſe it perpetually to drop like *burning Sulphur* upon our Souls. He can not only abandon us to the *furious* Reflections of our own *natural* Conſciences, which, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, will be *hereafter* extreamly *painful* and *vexatious*, but he can alſo infuſe *ſupernatural* Horrors into us, and pour in ſuch Swarms of *terrible* Thoughts upon us as will give us no Reſt, but ſting us perpetually Day and Night with *inexpreſſible* Anguiſh. And of this you have a *woful* Example in that *miſerable* Wretch *Francis Spira*, who, upon that *fearful* Breach he made in his Conſcience by a *cowardly* Renouncing of his *Religion*, was without any

Symptoms of a *bodily* Melancholy immediately ſeiſed with ſuch an *inexpreſſible* Agony of Mind as *amazed* his Phyſicians, *aſtoniſhed* his Friends, and *ſtruck* Terror into all that converſed with him. For he was ſo *near* to the Condition of a *damned Ghoſt*, that he verily believed *Hell* it ſelf was more *tolerable* than thoſe *inviſible* Laſhes that were continually laid on upon his Soul; and therefore wiſhed he were in *Hell*, and would gladly have diſpatched himſelf thither in hope to find Sanctuary there from thoſe *vengful* Thoughts which continually preyed upon his Soul. And if in this World our Soul is ſo *liable* to the Rod of the *Father of Spirits*, we may be ſure it will be ſo in the *other* too, where *God*, if he pleaſes can render it an *eternal Hell* to it ſelf by pouring continually into it *freſh* Floods of *horrible* Thoughts, which being thruſt on by an *Almighty* Power, and perpetually urged and repeated on the Mind, muſt neceſſarily create in it not only a moſt *exquiſite*, but *uninterrupted* Torment. And it being in his Power thus to laſh our Souls, to be ſure when once he is implacably incenſed againſt them, (as he will be *hereafter*, if we do not appeaſe him) he will let looſe his Power upon them, and make them feel his *wrathful* Reſentments in thoſe *dire* and *frightful* Thoughts with

with which he will Sting and Scourge them *for ever.* And if the Soul carry into *Eternity* with it thoſe *provoking* Luſts which do here incenſe Gods Diſpleaſure againſt it, it will there have no Shelter from the Storm of his Vengance, which like a Shower of *Fire* and *Brimſtone*, will be continually pouring down upon it. For while it continues in this Shop of Vanities, it hath a *great* Variety of Objects to divert thoſe *diſmal* Thoughts which *God* many times infuſes into it; but in the *other* World all theſe *diverting* Objects will be removed, and then every *diſmal* Thought which *God* lets looſe will ſeiſe and faſten upon it, and like *Prometheus*'s Vultures, prey on its *wretched* Heart *for ever.*

3*ly.* The Soul of Man is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of *Devils,* and other *malignant Spirits.* For when ever the Souls of Men do leave their Bodies, they doubtleſs flock with the Birds of their *own* Feather, and conſort themſelves with ſuch *ſeperate* Spirits as are of their *own* Genius and Temper; for beſides that Likeneſs doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and cauſe them to aſſociate with their *own* Kind, *good* and *bad* Spirits are by the *eternal* Laws of the *other* World diſtributed in *two ſeperate* Nations, and there live apart from one another, ha-

ving no *other* Communication or Intercourſe but what is between *two hoſtile* Countries that are continually deſigning and attempting one againſt *another*. So that when *wicked* Souls do leave this *terreſtrial* Abode, and paſs into *Eternity*, they are preſently incorporated by the Laws of that *inviſible* World into the Nation of *wicked* Spirits, and confined *for ever* to their moſt *wretched* Society and Converſe; and then how *miſerable* muſt their Condition be, who are damned to ſuch a *helliſh* Neighbourhood, and are allowed no *other* Company but of Devils and *deviliſh* Spirits? For ſince, as I have already ſhewed you, Spirits can as well act upon *one another* as Bodies, what can be expected when ſuch *malignant* Spirits meet, but that they ſhould be continualiv ſnarling among themſelves, and baiting and worrying *one another?* When *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Ill-nature* are the *common* Genius that inſpires and acts the *whole* Society, what can their Converſation be, but a *continual* Intercourſe of *mutual* Miſchiefs and Vexations; eſpecially conſidering how they have here laid the Foundations of an *eternal* Quarrel againſt *one another?* For *there* the Companions in Sin will meet, who by their *ill* Counſels, *wicked* Inſinuations, and *bad* Examples did mutually contribute to *each* others

others Ruin; and when theſe ſhall meet in that *woful* State, how will the *tormenting* Senſe of thoſe *irreparable* Injuries they have done *each* other incite them to exerciſe their *helliſh* Fury upon, and play the Devils with *one another?* And when a Company of *maſpiſh* Spirits ſo implacably incenſed againſt *one another* ſhall meet, and like ſo many *Scorpions, Snakes,* and *Adders* be ſhut up together in the *infernal* Dens, how is it *poſſible* they ſhould forbear *hiſſing* at, and *ſtinging,* and *ſpitting* Venom in *one anothers* Faces. But then beſides the *mutual* Plagues which thoſe *incenſed* and *furious* Spirits muſt needs be ſuppoſed to inflict upon *one another,* they will be alſo nakedly expoſed to the *powerful* Malice of the Devils, thoſe *fierce* Executioners of Gods *righteous* Vengeance, who, as *we now* find by Experience have Power to ſuggeſt *black* and *horrid* Thoughts, and to torture our Souls with ſuch *dreadful* Imaginations, as are far more *ſharp* and *exquiſite* than any *bodily* Torment. And if *now* they have ſuch Power over us when God thinks fit to let them looſe, what will they have *hereafter,* when theſe our *wretched* Spirits ſhall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they ſhall have a *free* Scope to exerciſe their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Vexations and Torments?

It ſeems at leaſt a mighty *probable* Notion that that *horrid* Agony of our *Saviour* in the Garden which cauſed him to *ſhriek* and *grone*, and *ſweat* as it were *great* Drops of Blood, was only the Effect of thoſe *preternatural* Terrors which the Devils, with whom he was then in Combat, impreſſed upon his *innocent* Mind. And if they had ſo much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul that was ſo ſtrongly guarded with the moſt *perfect* and *unſpotted* Vertues, what will they have over ours when God hath abandoned us to them, and thrown us as Preys into their Mouths? with what an *helliſh* Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is ſo much Tinder for their *injected* Sparks of Horror to take Fire on? When therefore our *guilty* Spirits ſhall not only be *liable* to the Scourge of *God*, but Devils and *damned* Ghoſts *too* ſhall have their *full Swing* at them, doubtleſs the *Hell within* them will be far more *intollerable* than any *Hell* of Fire and Brimſtone *without* them.

4*ly*. The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to be confined to the moſt *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes. What or where the Abode of *wicked* Spirits is till the Morn of the Reſurrection, is no where expreſly determined in the *Holy Scripture*; but ſince, whereſoever they

they are, they are doubtleſs under the Power and Dominion of the Devil, who, as the *Scripture* aſſures us, is *Prince of the Power of the Air*; it is highly *probable* that their *preſent* Reſidence is in theſe *lower* Regions of the World; that either being chaſed by thoſe *infernal* Powers under whoſe Tyranny they are, they are continually hurrying about in theſe *inferior* Tracts of Air, or, which perhaps is more *probable*, that they are impriſoned by thoſe *inviſible* Miniſters of the *divine* Juſtice vvithin the *dark* Abyſſes and *under-ground* Vaults of the Earth, and not permitted, but upon *ſpecial* Occaſions, to come abroad into this *upper* Region of Light and Liberty. But vvhereſoever they are, it is doubtleſs in ſome ſuch *horrid* and *diſmal* Priſon, as is fit only to receive ſuch *vile* and *deſperate* Malefactors, and ſecure them till the *great* Aſſizes, vvhen they ſhall be brough forth to receive their Tryal and *final* Judgment: And then being united to their Bodies, and thereby made *liable* to *corporeal* Torments, the *Scripture* expreſly affirms that they ſhall be ſhut up in *everlaſting* Flames, and be tormented *for ever* in a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone; for then the *Lord* himſelf ſhall come in Flames of Fire to render Vengance to all thoſe that obeyed not his Goſpel; and having vvith

thoſe *raging* Flames ſet every Part of this *lower* World on Fire, he vvill *re-aſcend* vvith all his Train to the *celeſtial* Manſions, and leave the *Wicked* vveltring *for ever* in this *burning* Vault belovv; for it is plain, that the *everlaſting* Fire to vvhich he vvill then Sentence them is the Conflagration of the World, vvhich, after the *Juſt* are raiſed, and caught up into the Clouds above the Reach of its *aſpiring* Flames, ſhall break forth on every ſide, and turn all this *Atmoſphere* into a Furnace of *inquenchable* Fire, and therein ſhall thoſe *wicked* Miſcreants that vvould not be reclaimed, be condemned to live *for ever*. For the Judgment being ended, the Judg and all his Retinue ſhall return and leave them in the midſt of a *burning* World ſurrounded vvith *Smoak* and *Fire*, *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion*, and vvrapt in *fierce* and *mercileſs* Flames, vvhich ſhall ſtick cloſe to and pierce through and through their Bodies, and *for ever* prey upon, but never conſume them. And vvhat an *intolerable* Mulct this is, I leave every Mans *natural* Senſe to judg.

5*ly*. The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *croſs*, *wild*, and *furious* Paſſions. We have *ſufficient* Experience in this Life how *vexatious* our *croſs* and *exceſſive* Paſſions are; for when our Paſſions

ſions are divided, and *contrary* Objects have raiſed *contrary* Deſires and Appetites in us, how do they rend and diſtract our Souls, and cauſe *perpetual* Mutinies and Tumults within us? But by Reaſon of thoſe many *ſenſual* Gratifications with which we now make a ſhift to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe Daughters of the Horſe-Leech, when they cry out *give*, *give*; we cannot be ſo *ſenſible* of the Trouble and Vexation of them; but unleſs we now ſubdue and mortifie them, we ſhall be forced to carry them into *Eternity* along with us. For by being *ſeparated* from their Bodies the Souls of Men are never *ſeparated* from their *prevailing* Tempers, but in their *ſeparated* State are for the main of the *ſame* Diſpoſition as they were *here*; and do retain the *ſame* Paſſions and Appetites. 'Tis true, they cannot be ſuppoſed to retain their *bodily* Appetites after they have thrown *off* their Bodies, but when they have wholly *accuſtomed* themſelves in this Life to *fleſhly* Pleaſures, and have never Experienced *ſpiritual* ones, it is impoſſible but that in the *other* they ſhould be tormented with an *outragious* Deſire of being *imbodied* again; that ſo being *incapable* of reliſhing any *other*, they may repeat thoſe *fleſhly* Pleaſures which heretofore they were accuſtomed to, and act over the *brutiſh* Scene anew.

And

And this *vehement* Hankering of theſe *carnalized* Souls to teturn into their *Bodily* State, is perhaps the only Senſuality that a *ſeperate* Soul is *capable* of; but it is ſuch a Senſuality as muſt neceſſarily render ſuch Souls extreamly *miſerable*; for in *that* State it will be like the Hunger of a *Starving* Man that is Immured between *two dead* Walls, that is, it will be a *fierce* Deſire without Hope of Satisfaction, a *corroding* Hunger, ſharpened with Deſpair of Food, than which there is nothing more intolerably *grievous* and *tormenting*. For how will it vex the *wretched* Spirit to look back from the Shores of Eternity into this *corporeal* World, and to ruminate thus with it ſelf; *O miſerable Creature that I am! here am I caſt away for ever upon a ſtrange and deſolate Shore, where I muſt Famiſh for want of Food, pine away a long Eternity, and wander to and fro for ever tormented with reſtleſs Rage and hungry unſatisfied Deſires; where there is not one Pleaſure that I can reliſh, not an Object that I can taſte any ſweetneſs in. Wo is me! yonder are all my Joys and Comforts, all that is dear and precious to me. O that I might go back again, and be once more reſtored to the Injoyment of them! but alas! between me and them there runs an impaſſible Gulph, that deprives me of all hope of returning!* For thus

will

will the *unhappy* Soul torment it ſelf with an *outragious* Longing for that which it can never hope to enjoy. But then beſides this Appetite of Senſuality which it will there be vexed with, it will alſo carry along with it all that *Envy* and *Malice*, that *Wrath* and *Impatience*, *Pride* and *Inſolence* which it here contracted; which *black* and *Helliſh* Paſſions will prove *perpetual* Furies in its Boſom; For in that *wretched* State it will not only have Objects always *preſent* to excite them, but ſuch Objects *too* as will excite them all at once to the moſt *outragious* Exceſſes. For when all at once it ſhall ſee others advanced to the *greateſt* Heights of Glory and Happineſs, and it ſelf not only rejected but abandoned to *endleſs* Miſery, the Senſe of this muſt neceſſarily irritate all its *deviliſh* Paſſions to the *higheſt* Extremities, and cauſe its *Pride* to ſwell, its *Envy* to burſt, and its *Wrath* to boil into a *Diabolical* Fury; and what a *continual Hell* muſt this create in the Soul, to be perpetually *worried* with ſo many *black* and *rabid* Paſſions, to have all its *inferiour* Parts and Affections, like thoſe of the *Monſter Scylla* whom the *Poets* talk of, as ſo many Dogs continually *barking* and *ſnarling* at *one another*, and yet remain *unſeperable*, as being *Comparts* of the *ſame* Subſtance?

6*ly*. The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to the

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intolerable Anguiſh of its own *guilty* Conſcience. *The Spirit of a Man*, ſays *Solomon*, *can bear his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Intimating that of all the Paſſions which *humane* Nature is *liable* to, there are none ſo *grievous* as that of a Mind awakened with a ſenſe of Guilt. And of the Truth of this we have ſome Experience even in this Life, tho now we can make a ſhift either to divert our ſelves by our *ſenſual* Mirth and Jollities, from liſtening to the Clamours of our *guilty* Minds, or elſe to deceive our ſelves into a *groundleſs* Peace by *indulgent* and *fallacious* Principles; but unleſs we expiate our Guilts here, we ſhall carry them into Eternity with us, where all thoſe *ſenſual* Pleaſures, with which we now divert our ſelves from reflecting on our Actions will be removed, and all thoſe *fallacious* Principles, with which we cheat and deceive our ſelves, will be baffled by a *woful* Experience. So that then our Souls will be nakedly expoſed to the Laſh of its own *furious* Thoughts, and having nothing to guard or defend it ſelf againſt the *cutting* Reflections of a *guilty* Conſcience, which being rouſed up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* ſenſe of our Miſery will be always clamouring upon us, and continually torturing our *wretched* Minds with *ſharp* and

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vexatious Reflections: and beſides, whilſt our Soul doth act by *bodily* Inſtruments, and work in this Mire of Fleſh, it is *impoſſible* it ſhould be ſo *nimble* and *expedite* in its Motions, as it will be when it is a *naked* Spirit. For then its Perceptions will be much *clearer*, its Convictions more *ſtrong* and *evident*, and all its Reflections *active* as the Lightning, and *quick* as the Wing of an Angel. So that whereas now the *ſharpeſt* Stings of our Conſcience have an Intermixture of Fancy and Imagination in them, being *groſs* and *material* Powers do dull and rebate the Edg of them, and render them leſs *pungent* and *ſenſible*; when we are *ſtripped* out of our Fleſh, and ſent *naked* into the *other* World, we ſhall have no Clog about us to break or allay thoſe *ſharp* Reflections with which we ſhall be forced to laſh our ſelves *for ever*. And then our Conſcience will cut to the quick, and ſting with a *corroding* Venom; then will the Remembrance of thoſe Guilts which brought our Miſeries upon us, rouze *up* ſuch a Swarm of Horrors in our Minds, as we ſhall be *able* neither to avoid nor indure. For the Senſe of our Miſery will be every Moment ſuggeſting thoſe Guilts to our Minds that were the Cauſe of it, and continually upbraiding us with thoſe *deſperate* Follies by which we

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ran our ſelves into it; the Conſideration of which will cauſe us to hate and curſe our ſelves *for ever*, and to diſcharge our Fury upon *our own* Heads, which will make our Soul turn Devil to it ſelf, and force it to be its *own* Executioner. For it being now *conſcious* to it ſelf that its Miſeries are nothing elſe but the *rueful* and *pitileſs* Deſerts of its *own* Folly and Madneſs, it will be continually meditating *horrible* Reflections and ſinging Satyrs on it ſelf. So that while it is wandring among *wretched* Ghoſts through the *diſmal* Shades below, it will never ceaſe laſhing it ſelf with its *own ſharp* and *ſtinging* Thoughts, till it hath chafed it ſelf into a Fury, and boiled up its *ſelf-condemning* Rage into *everlaſting* Madneſs.

7*ly*. And laſtly, The Soul of Man is alſo *liable* to endure all theſe *diſmal* things *for ever*: For that our Souls are naturally *immaterial* and *immortal*, I have already proved; ſo that if *God* in his *infinite* Juſtice ſhall think fit to ſentence *wicked* Souls irrecoverably to all theſe above named Miſeries, they muſt by the Conſtitution of their *own* Natures live in, and undergo them for ever. And that he doth think to pronounce and execute ſuch a Sentence upon them, he himſelf hath aſſured us; for ſo in *Scripture* he hath plainly declared, that their Puniſh-

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ment ſhall be *everlaſting*, *Matth.* 25. 7. *Theſe*, ſaith he ſpeaking of the Wicked, *ſhall go away into everlaſtin Puniſhment:* and accordingly the Fire in, and with which they are to be puniſhed, is called *everlaſting fire*, *Matth.* 25. 41. and that they ſhall ſubſiſt for ever in this Fire, and be *co-eternal* with it, is evident by thoſe Paſſions and Actions that are attributed to them in it; for *Rev.* 14. 11. they are ſaid to *have no reſt day nor night* in it, but to be in a *continual unintermitting* Fever, that will neceſſarily burn and ſcorch them, and not allow them the *leaſt* Intervals of Eaſe or Comfort. And in *Matth.* 13. 42. the *bitter* Anguiſh vvhich they ſhall endure in this Fire is deſcribed by their *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnaſhing* their Teeth; vvhich Actions are *plain* Indications not only of their ſubſiſting in this *everlaſting Fire*, but of the *extream* Horror and Anguiſh that they ſhall therein endure. And indeed vvhen *God* ſentences any *immortal* Being to Miſery, its Miſery muſt be ſuppoſed to continue as long as it lives, and conſequently to continue *for ever*, ſince it is to ſubſiſt and live *for ever*. And what a *fearful* Acceſſion is this to all thoſe above named Miſeries? If we were to endure the *ſofteſt* and moſt *gentle* Pain without any Interval for *thirty*, *forty*, or a *hundred* Years, the

the Proſpect of that which is to *come* would render that which is *preſent* ſo *intolerable*, that we ſhould quickly grow weary of our Lives, and wiſh our ſelves in our Graves. *Lord!* what ſhall we then do when we come to languiſh out a *long Eternity* in the *tormenting* Agonies of *damned* Ghoſts? How will it imbitter every *preſent* Torment to us, to think of that *never-ending* Duration of Torment to come, that after we have conſumed *Millions* of *Millions* of Ages on the Rack, we have ſtill an *eternal Hell* behind, and are as far *diſtant* from the End of our Miſery, as we were when it *firſt* began? O! now if we could die and be *inſenſible for ever!* what *welcome* Tidings would it be? how gladly ſhould we receive that *fatal* Blow that could put an End to a *woful* Eternity? But now it will be in vain for us to cry, *O Death, Death, have mercy upon us, and diſpatch us quickly into an eternal Grave!* For Death is *deaf* and cannot hear, every Moment it ſtabs and wounds, but *woe is me!* it cannot kill; it ſtrikes and ſtrikes but cannot ſtrike home, and ſo is forced to continue as ſtrugling under the Pangs of an *immortal* Death. If there were any Proſpect of an End of our Miſery, though it were after a *Million* of Ages, this would give ſome Eaſe to the *languiſhing* Sufferer; But

But *never*, *never*---O how that *fatal* Word ſtabs the *wretched* Soul, and rankles its Anguiſh into *eternal* Deſperation! For to be in *extream* Miſery, and ſee no End of it, is the Perfection of Hell, and the *utmoſt* Poſſibility of Damnation.

And thus have I endeavoured to repreſent unto you the *fearful* Mulcts our Souls are *liable* to in the *other* World; which are ſuch as, one would think, were *ſufficient* to awaken the moſt *ſtupid* and *inſenſible* Creature.

II. I now paſs on to the *ſecond* thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you upon what Accounts it is that our Souls are *liable* to theſe *dreadful* Things; or what it is that expoſes us to the Danger of them. In general, it is *our own* Sin and Wickedneſs, which doth not only incenſe the *holy God* againſt us, who is of *purer* Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and provoke and urge him to inflict theſe *endleſs* Miſeries upon us as the *juſt* Retributions of our *deſperate* Folly and Obſtinacy; but doth alſo by its own *natural* Cauſality prepare us for, and ſink us into that *miſerable* State So that if *God* ſhould not damn us, yet *our own* Wickedneſs would; the Miſery of Damnation being *little* elſe but the Perfection and Conſummation of Sin. For the Sting of *eternal* as well as *temporal* Death is Sin, and it is *Goodneſs* and *Wickedneſs* that makes *Hea-*

ven and *Hell*, thoſe two *oppoſite* Hemiſpheres of the *Inviſible* World; and as, if *Goodneſs* were plucked out of *Heaven*, it would ceaſe to be *Heaven*, and be overcaſt immediately with the *diſmal* Shades of *Hell*; ſo if *Wickedneſs* were baniſhed out of *Hell*, it would be *Hell* no longer, but preſently clear up into Light and Serenity, and ſhine forth into a *glorious Heaven*; But whereſoever Sin and Wickedneſs reigns, there is Hell and Damnation in its *neceſſary* Cauſes. Since therefore in *neceſſary* Cauſes that which is the Cauſe of the Cauſe is alſo the Cauſe of the Effect, our *beſt* way to be reſolved what it is that renders us *liable* to theſe *future* Miſeries, will be to enquire what it is that renders us *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* Condition at the *preſent*; for whatſoever renders us *liable* to Sin, muſt neceſſarily expoſe us to the Danger of Miſery. Now the Danger of our falling into and continuing in a State of Sin, proceeds from theſe *following* Cauſes.

1. From the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*.

2*ly*. From the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed.

3*ly*. From the more *cloſe* and *intimate* Acceſs which theſe Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to *Goodneſs*.

4*ly*.

4*ly*. From the *great* Correſpondence of theſe Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Nature.

5*ly*. From the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make Uſe of, and apply theſe Temptations to us.

6*ly*. From the *plauſible* Pretences we are furniſhed with to *excuſe*, and *juſtifie* our Compliance with them.

7*ly*. From the *extream* Difficulty which this our Compliance brings us under to *reject* and *vanquiſh* them for the future.

1. We are *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery from the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*. If indeed we were neceſſarily determined to *Good*, our Happineſs would be intailed upon our Natures, and it would be as *impoſſible* for us to be *miſerable*, as it is for the Fire to *freeze*, or for the Ice to *burn*; but to be ſo determined I am apt to think is not *conſiſtent* with the condition of a Creature. For to be *good* by a *natural* Neceſſity requires an *infallible* Underſtanding, or a Mind that is infinitely *removed* from all Poſſibility of being deceived and miſtaken; and this no *finite* Mind can be: But how ſhould the Will be in all particulars neceſſarily determined to what is Right, ſo long as it is

under the Conduct of a *fallible* Mind that hath a *natural* Poſſibility of miſleading it? So that to be *naturally, neceſſarily*, and *eſſentially good*, ſeems to be an *incommunicable* Prerogative of the *Divine Nature*, according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good ſave one, and that is God*, Luke 18.19. For ſince no Will can be *eſſentially good* but that which is guided by an *infallible* Mind, and no Mind can be *eſſentially infallible* but that which is *infinite* in Knowledge, it hence neceſſarily follows, that to be *free* to *Good* and *Evil* is as *natural* to *reaſonable* Creatures, as it is to be *finite* in Knowledge and Underſtanding. 'Tis true the *greater* Light of Knowledge there is in the Mind, the *leſs* Freedom to *Evil* there muſt be in the Will, unleſs it hath ſome *antecedent* Biaſs and Inclination to *Evil*; and conſequently the Angels being of far more *intelligent* Natures than we Men, muſt needs be naturally leſs *free* to *Evil*; but yet that even they are naturally *free* to it is evident, for that ſome of them have actually lapſed into Devils; and if they are ſo by their Natures, then much more are we by ours, who are ſo much their Inferiours in the *rational* World. For as we are *finite* Intelligences we muſt neceſſarily have ſome Degree of Freedom to *Evil* in us, but as we are of the *lowermoſt* Rank of Intelligences, we

we muſt naturally have *greater* Degrees of this Freedom in us than any *other* Order of *intelligent* Natures; And if this were all, yet this very Condition of our Natures renders us more *liable* to degenerate into an *evil* and *ſinful* State, than any *other* kind of *reaſonable* Creatures. If we were now in a State of *perfect* Innocence, yet of all *intelligent* Creatures, we ſhould have the greateſt Reaſon to apprehend the Danger of our Fall; becauſe being the *leaſt intelligent* we have the *greateſt* Freedom to *Evil*, and conſequently are on that Account in the *greateſt* danger of falling into it. By the very Condition of our Natures we are of all *rational* Creatures placed *neareſt* to the Brinks of the *fatal* Precipice, and therefore have moſt Reaſon to apprehend the Danger of falling *headlong* into it. For doubtleſs among *innocent* Creatures, there are none ſo near the Danger of ſinning as thoſe whoſe Wills are *leaſt* reſtrain'd from it, and therefore though we were now as *innocent* as the *bleſſed* Angels are, yet our Condition would be unſpeakably more *unſafe*; becauſe by how much we fall ſhort of them in Knowledge and Underſtanding, by ſo much we ſhould exceed them in our Freedom to *Evil*, and conſequently by ſo much the more *liable* to it. But this alas is the *leaſt* of our Danger; For

2*ly*. We are liable to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed. For this State of Being in which we now are, being intended by *God* for our Tryal and Probation, it was *requiſite* in order thereunto that we ſhould be placed among Difficulties, that we might have *ſufficient* Opportunity to exerciſe our Skill and Courage in *Religion*; for unleſs we had ſome ſuch Difficulties to encounter, there could no Proof or Tryal be made of our Virtue. Hence therefore hath *God* placed our *rational* Souls in *mortal* Bodies, which do naturally abound with *brutiſh* Appetites and Deſires, and compaſſed us round with this World of *ſenſual* Goods and Evils, which continually importunes and excites them, that ſo we might have ſufficient opportunity to exerciſe thoſe *humane* Virtues which conſiſt in the Dominion of our *rational* Faculties over theſe our *bodily* Appetites and Deſires, that we might never want occaſion to give the moſt *glorious* Proofs of our *Patience* and *Chaſtity*, *Temperance* and *Equanimity*, *Meekneſs* and *Sobriety*; all which are *proper* to us as Beings made up of *Soul* and *Body* whence all thoſe *brutiſh* Appetites ariſe, in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof conſiſts the Nature of *humane* Virtue and Vice. So that this *preſent* State of

humane

humane Life is intended by *God* for a Field of Combat between *Reaſon* and *Senſe*, between the Law in our Minds, and the Law in our Members; and that the Victory of Reaſon might, through the Difficulty of it, be render'd more *glorious* and *rewardable*, he hath furniſhed its *Antagoniſt*, viz. the *bodily* Appetite with *various* Weapons, with the Temptations of a World of *ſenſitive* Goods and Evils to aſſault and oppoſe it, to try its Metal, and exerciſe both its *active* and *paſſive* Virtues; and upon the ſucceſs of this Combat depends the *everlaſting* Fate of the Soul. If Senſe prevail, and lead her finally Captive into Vice and Wickedneſs, ſhe is loſt *for ever*; but if Reaſon get the Victory, and finally reduce the Deſires and Appetites of Senſe under the Dominion of Virtue, when this *mortal* Life ends She ſhall triumph *for ever*, and be tranſlated hence into a *free* and *diſintangled* State, where ſhe ſhall be vexed and inticed no more with the Importunities of *ſenſual* Luſts and Affections, but to all *Eternity* enjoy the Serenity and Pleaſure of a *pure Intellectual* Being. This being therefore the *true* State of Affairs, it is *too* to *obvious* how *liable* the Soul is to miſcarry when it is placed in a Body among ſo many *brutiſh* Paſſions and Appetites, and that Body is placed in a *tempting* World, among ſo many

ſenſitive Goods and Evils that are continually importuning thoſe Appetites to *mutiny* againſt Reaſon, and carry us away Captive into Folly and Wickedneſs. How much Reaſon have we to look about us, when we are placed in the midſt of ſo *many* Dangers, and have ſuch *numberleſs* Snares on every ſide ready to decoy and intangle us? But this is not all neither; For

3*ly*. We are *liable* alſo to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the more *cloſe* and *intimate* Acceſs which theſe Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to Goodneſs. For the *great* Advantage which theſe Temptations to Vice have over the moſt *powerful* Motives to Virtue is this, that they are all of them *preſent* and *ſenſible*; for as for thoſe *grand* Motives to Goodneſs that are drawn from the Conſideration of our *future* State, they propoſe to our *Hopes* and *Fears*, thoſe Maſter-Springs of our Motions, ſuch *Goods* and *Evils* as are a *great* way *off*, and beyond the proſpect of our *bodily* Senſes, which makes the Land-skip of them appear exceeding *dim* and *faint* upon the Mind; their Futurity, which is one ſort of Diſtance, cauſing them like Things afar *off* to look *confuſed* and *indiſtinct*, by Reaſon of which they cannot affect us ſo powerfully, and draw ſuch

ſuch *ſtrong* and *laſting* Draughts of themſelves upon our minds: For Goods, like Magnets, have always the *ſtrongeſt* Attractions when they are *neareſt*; but as for thoſe *inviſible* Goods of the *other* World, they are at ſuch a Diſtance from us that they can hardly reach us who live upon the *remoteſt* Circumference of the Sphere of their Attraction. And as Diſtance leſſens all Objects to the Eye, and renders them much *ſmaller* in Appearance than they are in Reality; ſo the *remote* Futurity of thoſe *eternal* Goods which the Motives of Vertue do propoſe, detracts from their *juſt* Magnitude and makes them, tho unſpeakably *vaſt* in themſelves, appear exceeding *ſmall* and *inconſiderable* to our *ſhort-ſighted* Minds. And the ſame is to be ſaid of thoſe *future* Evils alſo, which they denounce againſt us; and beſides, being not only *remote*, but *inviſible* too, they cannot ſtrike upon our Senſes, by which the moſt *vigorous* Impreſſions of Things are made upon our Minds; whereas the Temptations of Vice are all *preſent* and *ſenſible*, and do ſo circle us round as ſoon as we look abroad into the World, that which way ſoever we turn our Eyes they are ſtill before us thruſting themſelves into our Minds, and with their *conſtant* Importunity ſtirring and working our Deſires.

So

So that when ever theſe *outward* Goods or Evils do aſſault us, we lie *bare* and *open* to them, and they continually preſs ſo cloſe upon our Senſes, that we are not able to avoid their Impreſſions: When any *outward* Good invites us to a ſinful Action, it hath the *vaſt* Advantage of being *preſent* and *ſenſible*; by Reaſon of which, it having a more *immediate* Acceſs to our Minds doth many times prevail before we can Rally up a *ſufficient* Strength of Conſiderations againſt it; and when we ſet our ſelves to reſiſt and ſtruggle with it, the *beſt* of our Weapons is a Company of *thin* and *faint* Notions of Things a far *off*; Things that we never ſaw nor felt; which whilſt we are recollecting, the Vice we are Tempted to, hath its Powers ready to ſeize upon the Will, which having oftentimes experienced the Pleaſure it invites to, is the more eaſily *ſeduced* to a *freſh* Compliance. And whilſt our Enemies are ſo *near* us, and our Helps and Succors ſo far *off*, we muſt needs acknowledge our Danger very *great* and urgent.

4*ly*. We are *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *great* Correſpondence of theſe Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Natures. For by Reaſon of the Nearneſs and Senſibleneſs of thoſe *outward worldly* Goods

Goods by which we are continually tempted and ſolicited to Evil, they have the Advantage of preingaging our Affections to them before we arrive to the Uſe of our Reaſon; for in our *tender* years theſe are the only Goods that we can reliſh, they are theſe that do *feed*, *clothe*, and *furniſh* us in hand with whatſoever our *natural* Appetites do gape for; that are the *ſole* Entertainment of our *childiſh* Fancies, and the *only* Objects our yet *unfledg'd* Thoughts and Deſires can reach at, and our Youth being thus intirely inured to them, by that time we are grown *up* to the Age of Reaſon and the Capacities of Virtue and Religion, we have generally contracted ſuch an *exceſſive* Inclination towards them, and are ſo ſtrongly biaſs'd with the Love of them, that whenſoever they beckon to us we are ready to follow them through all the *forbidden* Tracts that lead to *everlaſting* Ruin. For our Natures being thus *vitiated*, the Temptations *without* us have a ſtrong Party *within* us, a Party of *traytorous* Inclinations which upon every Summons ſollicites us to yield, and ſurrender up our Vertue and Innocence; and no ſooner can any Temptation from *without* give the Alarm, but preſently *our own* Luſts are *up* raiſing a Mutiny *within* us, and with the Heats of our *corrupted* Fancy do

do many times ſo diſorder our Underſtanding that it cannot rally up its Conſiderations againſt them. For before ever our Underſtanding could be Furniſhed with Conſiderations, our Hearts were prepoſſeſſed with ſuch an *exceſſive* degree of *ambitious*, *covetous*, and *luxurious* Inclinations, that when afterwards the *Pleaſures*, *Profits*, and *Honours without* begin to hold forth their *grateful* Lures to us, and to tempt us away to *Fraud* or *Treachery*, to *Vanity* or *Licentiouſneſs*, thoſe *depraved* Inclinations have gotten ſuch Head *within* us, that they prove moſt commonly *too ſtrong* for all our Conſideration, and with their *impetuous* Current carry us away, and drive us *headlong* down towards *eternal* Ruin; and unleſs we put forth all the ſtrength of our Reaſon and Reſolution, and the Grace of *God* alſo come *in* to our Aid, it will be *impoſſible* for us to ſtem ſuch a *furious* Tide when it is driven by the Wind of an *outward* Temptation. When therefore *our own* Inclnations do ſo vigorouſly conſpire with the Temptations *without* to thruſt us on into Sin and Perdition, how can we be *inſenſible* of the *eminent* danger we are in of Miſcarrying forever? But

5*ly*. We are *liable* alſo to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *Eternal* Miſery, from

from the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make Uſe of, and apply theſe Temptations to us. For that the Devil doth commonly, as an *aſſiſtant Genius* to the Corruption of our Natures; excite and provoke Men to Wickedneſs is very evident from *Scripture*; where he is ſaid *to work in the Children of Diſobedience*. Eph. 2.2. *To fill the Heart of* Ananias *to lye to the Holy Ghoſt*. Acts. 5. 3. *And to take away the Word out of Mens hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved*, Luke 8. 12. All which Expreſſions do plainly imply that the Devil is a *conſtant* Agent in the Sins of Men. And being a *Spiritual* Agent, he muſt needs be ſuppoſed to have a *nearer* Acceſs to the Soul than any *material* Cauſe whatſoever. For tho he be totally debarr'd from all kind of Intercourſe with the *immediate* Operations of the *reaſonable* Soul, and can no more look into the Thoughts than we can into the Bowels of the Earth; yet he can eaſily get into the Fancy which ſtands next to that *myſterious* Chamber that is open to no Eye but Gods, and make what uſe he pleaſes of the *infinite* Images and *Phantaſms* that are in it, and diſpoſe, and order, and diſtinguiſh them into the Pictures of what Objects he pleaſes, juſt as the Painter doth his *numerous Colours* that lie confuſedly before him in their

ſeveral

ſeveral Shells, and continue and repeat thoſe Pictures and Repreſentations as *long* and as *oft* as he pleaſes. And then conſidering what the *natural* Uſe of the Fancy is, both to the *Underſtanding* and *Will*, how it prompts the *one* with matter of Invention, and ſupplies it with Variety of Objects to work on, and draws forth and excites the *other* to chuſe or reject thoſe Objects it preſents, according as they are pleaſing or diſpleaſing; we muſt needs ſuppoſe that the Devil hath a *vaſt* Advantage of inſinuating his *black* Suggeſtions into the Soul, by having ſuch *free* Acceſs into the Fancy. And accordingly he is ſaid to *put it into the heart of Judas to betray Chriſt*, John. 13. 2. But then he being not only a *ſpiritual*, but alſo an *intellectual* Agent, of a *vaſt* and *capacious* Underſtanding by Nature, and particularly improved in the *black* Art of tempting by a *long* Experience of its Wiles and Stratagems, having been a Tempter almoſt ever ſince he hath been an Angel; he muſt needs be ſuppoſed to be wonderfully *expert* and *ſagacious* in it; that after having had *five Thouſand* years experience of the Methods of ſeducing Souls to increaſe and perfect his *natural* Subtilty, he muſt by this be fully inſtructed when and how to apply himſelf to every Age and Conſtitution. For this hath been his *ſole* Buſineſs wherein he hath

hath been infinitely *intent* and *active* ever ſince he became a Devil, and if from a Man, then much more from a Devil of one Buſines. *Good Lord deliver me*, from a Devil that for *five thouſand* Years hath been continually making Experiments of Temptation, and drawing them into Rules to direct and order his *miſchievous* Practice on the Souls of Men. But beſides, as the Devil is of a *ſpiritual* and *intelligent* Nature, ſo he hath a *vaſt* Number of his *black* Angels continually roving about the World to ſeduce and captivate us into Sin and Ruin. And tho theſe *malignant* Spirits have no ligament of *natural* Love between them to tie and oblige them to *one another*, yet by that *perfect* Hatred which they all bear to *God* and *Men* they are united together in an *inviolable* League, and go hand in hand with *one another* in purſuance of their *deſperate* Deſign to involve our *wretched* Souls in the ſame *eternal* Ruin with themſelves, which renders their Force ſo much the more *formidable*. And when we have ſo many *ſpiritual*, *ſubtil*, and *Powerful* Adverſaries combining againſt, and continually wandring *to* and *fro* like *roaring Lyons* to devour us, we cannot but apprehend our Danger exceeding *great*; eſpecially conſidering the *infinite* Temptations from *without*, that this World af-

fords the great Variety of *ſenſual* Goods and Evils which they have to object to our *carnalized* Minds. For theſe *miſchievous* Spirits having ſo *great* Inſight into our Tempers, and ſo *great* a Choice of Objects to ſuggeſt to our Fancies, can never be at a Loſs how they may nick us with a *convenient* Temptation; and that which gives their Temptations a *vaſt* Advantage over us is, that we know not how to diſtinguiſh them from the Motions of *our own* Hearts, For could we ſee the Devil at our Elbows, or hear him whiſpering at our Ears every time he inſinuates his *wicked* ſuggeſtions into our Minds, we ſhould doubtleſs reject them with an unſpeakable Horror; but becauſe when they are convey'd into us, we know not how to diſtinguiſh them from the *natural* Births of *our own* Minds; therefore we do make no ſcruple to *hug* and *dandle* them in our Thoughts and entertain them with an *actual* Complacence. And when the Devil can convey his Poyſon into us in ſuch an *inviſible* manner, without diſcovering his Devils Face; when he can thus prompt us behind the Curtain, and ſo diſguiſe his Whiſpers that we can't diſcern them from the *ſecret* Luſtings of *our own* Hearts; how can we be ſafe, without great Care and Watchfulneſs, from the Malice of ſuch a *formidable* Enemy? But *6ly.*

6ly. We are alſo *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *plauſible* Pretences we are furniſhed with to excuſe and juſtify our Compliance with them. When by *our own* Folly and the Devil's Malice we are actually betrayed into any *wilful* Sin, a *ſpeedy* Repentance would recover us immediately, and heal the Wound as ſoon as it is made; but inſtead of that we have a *thouſand plauſible* Excuſes to palliate and skin it over; but alas! in the mean time it rots inwardly, and is feſtring apace into an *incurable* Gangrene. For when our Conſcience begins to fly in our Faces, we have no *other* Way, but either preſently to repent of, or to excuſe and cloak our Wickedneſs; the *later* of which is uſually pitch'd on as being both the moſt *eaſy*, and the moſt *agreeable* with our *corrupt* Inclinations. And indeed there are ſo many Coverts which Men have found out for their Luſts to ſhelter them from the Perſecutions of their Conſciences, that this Way there are no Men can be long to ſeek; for either they may blanch them over with an *innocent* Name, and call their Intemperances, *Good-fellowſhip*, their Knaveries, *ingenious Fetches*; and their Incontinences, *Tricks of Wit*; or elſe they may extenuate and mince them into *Peccadillo's*, and ſmooth over their *groſſeſt* Rebel-

lions with the ſofter name of *humane* Failings and Infirmities; or elſe they may furniſh themſelves with ſome Shew of Argument to vindicate their Vices and aſſert them *lawful*, as ſome of late have done in the Caſe of *Fornication* and *Uncleanneſs*; or elſe they may ſet up for *Philoſophical* Sinners, and quote Texts out of their Goſpel, *the Leviathan*, againſt the *eternal* Differences of *Good* and *Evil*. But if their Conſciences will not be put off with ſuch *poor* Pretences as theſe, there are *Religious* Pretences enough in the World to protect and give Countenance to All their Impieties; and they may either fly to the *Romiſh* Doctrins of *Confeſſion* and *Penance*, of *Venial Sins*, and of *probable Opinions*, with any one of which they may eaſily reconcile their Luſts and Conſciences: Or if they chance to have an *Antipathy* to the name of *Roman Catholick*, they may furniſh themſelves with ſuch Doctrins out of ſome of our *modern Enthuſiaſts*, as will be as *favourable* to their Luſts as they need, or wiſh, or deſire; that will conſecrate their *irregular* Paſſions into Signs of Grace, and dwindle their *groſſeſt* Crimes into the Spots of God's People; that will exalt a *mechanick* Train of Fancies and Paſſions into a *ſincere* Converſion, and improve an *Hyſterical Fit* into a *ſpiritual Experience*. By theſe, and ſuch like ways

ways may Men eaſily excuſe their Vices to their Conſciences; and when they are furniſhed with ſo *many* Expedients whereby to inable themſelves to ſin on quietly, in how much Danger are they of falling *faſt aſleep* in the midſt of their Guilts, and never waking again till they flame out about their Ears into *everlaſting Burnings*? For whereas this Faculty of Conſcience was implanted within us by the Author of our Natures, to be a Guard to our Innocence, and a Scourge to our Luſts, the Generality of Men have invented ſo many Tricks to ſhift and evade it, that it is become almoſt totally *uſeleſs* to them. And when they have thus diſabled their Conſciences from defending them againſt the Importunities of their Luſts, in what *unſpeakable* Danger muſt they be, not only of *falling* into, but *continuing* in them till they have utterly ruined and deſtroyed them?

7*ly*. And laſtly, We are alſo *liable* to fall into a *ſinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Miſery, from the *extream* Difficulty which this our Compliance with thoſe Temptations brings us under, to reject and vanquiſh them for the future. For every *new* Compliance with Temptations to *Evil* foments and inrages our *evil* Inclinations, and when once theſe *evil* Inclinations are by

our *cuſtomary* Compliances educated into *ſinful* Habits, it will be *impoſſible* for us without a *mighty* Aſſiſtance of *divine* Grace to vanquiſh and ſubdue them. So that as upon the *former* Accounts we are in extream danger of falling into *ſinful* Courſes, upon this Account we are in no *leſs* Danger of continuing in them. For by complying with *this* Temptation, I ſhall very much diſable my ſelf from withſtanding the *next*; and if I yield to *that too*, the *third* will find me much more *ready* and *tractable*, and ſo on, till at laſt the Temptation grows firſt *familiar*, and then *natural* to me, and then it will be *hard*, and then *harder*, and then almoſt *impoſſible* to reject or deny it. And when Things are reduced to this Iſſue that my Sin is *naturalized* to me, and grown into an inveterate Habit, *the Lord have mercy upon me!* for now I am in the *Suburbs* of *Hell*, but one Remove from the State of the *Damned*, and am ſo far gone in a *confirmed* State of Impiety, that I have almoſt loſt my Liberty of returning; and unleſs I am ſpeedily reſcued by ſome Miracle of Grace, it is *morally impoſſible* I ſhould ever eſcape. Thus as we go on from *one* Degree of Wickedneſs to *another*, we do as it were break down the Bridge behind us, and do what in us lies to diſappoint our ſelves of all Hopes of any *future*

ture Retreat. For every Step *forwards* in our *ſinful* Progreſs renders our Return more *difficult*; and when once we have proceeded into a Cuſtom and Habit of Sin, we ſhall find Repentance ſo *irkſom* to us, and ſo much againſt the Grain of our Nature, that it is a thouſand to one but that the Difficulty of it will utterly diſhearten us from attempting it; and ſo rather than take ſo much Pains as we muſt neceſſarily do in ſwimming againſt the *impetuous* Stream of our Natures, we ſhall tamely yield to it, and ſuffer our ſelves to be born down by it into the *dead Sea* of *endleſs* Miſery. When therefore there are ſo many Cauſes conſpiring together to betray us into *ſinful* Courſes, and when there are ſo many Difficulties when once we are *in* to oppoſe and hinder our Retreat, what *eminent* Danger are we in of falling into, and perſevering in Sin to our *everlaſting* Ruin! And thus you ſee how extreamly *liable* we are upon all theſe Accounts to be *loſt for ever*, that is, to plunge our ſelves into all thoſe *endleſs* Miſeries which the Loſs of our Souls implies.

What then remains but that being ſeriouſly affected with the Senſe of our Danger, we preſently awake out of our Security, and with the *deepeſt* Concern for our *immortal* Souls, cry out with St. *Peter*'s Auditors,

Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved? Verily when I reflect upon the *ſtrange* Unconcernedneſs of Men about their *future* Condition, I am tempted to think either that they do not believe they have an *immortal* Soul in them, or that if they do, they believe it is *impoſſible* it ſhould *for ever* miſcarry. For how is it *conceivable* that Men, who in *other* matters are ſo *ſolicitous* when their Intereſt is at Stake, and expoſed to the *leaſt* Hazard, ſhould believe that they have Souls in Danger of periſhing *for ever*, and yet take no more Care or Regard of them, but (like the *forgetful* Mother, who, when her Houſe was on Fire, to ſave her Goods, forgot her Child) lay out all their thoughts upon the *little* Concerns of this *frail* and *mortal* Life, and in the mean time forget their *precious* Souls, and leave them periſhing in the Flames of Perdition? O *ſtupid* Creature! what art thou made of that canſt conſider that thou haſt an *immortal* Soul ſurrounded with ſo many Dangers of being loſt *for ever*, and yet be no more concerned for its Preſervation? Methinks if thou hadſt any Senſe in thee, having a Proſpect of ſuch *endleſs* Miſeries before thee, the *remoteſt* Poſſibility of falling into them ſhould be enough to ſtartle and awake thee; but when thou art ſo near the Brink of thoſe Miſeries, and haſt

haſt ſo many Cauſes round about thee ſhoving thee forward, and thruſting thee *headlong* down into them, and yet be no more concerned at it, is ſuch a Prodigy of *ſenſleſs* Stupidity, as Heaven and Earth may juſtly be aſtoniſhed at. 'Tis true, if the Danger thou art in were ſuch as is *impoſſible* to be evaded, it would then be the *wiſeſt* Courſe thou couldſt take to concern thy ſelf as *little* as may be about it; but rather to live merrily whilſt thou mayſt, and not *antedate* thy Miſery, by thinking of the *diſmal* Futurity. But *God* be praiſed this is not our Caſe, though our Condition be *dangerous*, yet it is far from *deſperate*; for if we will uſe our *honeſt* Endeavour, and vigorouſly exert the Faculties of our Nature, we not only may, but ſhall eſcape. There are indeed a *great* many Cauſes of our Danger, a *great* many Enemies concurring to our Ruin, but none of theſe are able to effect it, unleſs we our ſelves joyn hands in the *fatal* Conſpiracy: If we will be but *faithful* Friends to our ſelves and true to our own *eternal* Intereſt, it will be beyond the power of all thoſe Cauſes together to do us any *material* Injury. For *bleſſed* be the *good God* thoſe that are for us, are far *greater* and *mightier* than thoſe that are againſt us; againſt us we have the *World*, the *Fleſh*, and

the *Devil*, the *weakeſt* of which is, I confeſs, a *dangerous* and *puiſſant* Enemy; but for us we have *God* and *Angels*, and *our own* Reaſon aſſiſted with the moſt *invincible* Motives; with *vaſt* and *glorious* Promiſes, that ſtand beckoning to us with Crowns of Immortality in their hands, to call us *off* from the Purſuit of our Luſts to the Practice of Virtue and Religion; with *direful* Threatnings, that are continually Alarming and warning us of the *dreadful* Conſequents of our Sins; and ſundry other ſuch *mighty*, I had almoſt ſaid *Almighty* Motives, as, if we would ſeriouſly attend to, would certainly render our Souls *impregnable* againſt all the Temptations of Vice. And beſides our Reaſon thus Armed and Accoutered, we have on our ſide the *Holy* Angels of *God*, who are always ready to prompt us to, and aſſiſt us in our Duty, and to *ſecond* us in all our *ſpiritual* Combats againſt the Enemies of our Souls. And beſides all theſe we have with us the *Almighty Spirit* of *God*, who upon our *ſincere* Deſires and *honeſt* Endeavours is engaged to aid us, and *co-operate* with us in working out our Salvation; whoſe Grace is abundantly *ſufficient* for us, to ſtrengthen us in our Weakneſs, to ſupport us under our *greateſt* Difficulties, and carry us on victoriouſly through the moſt *violent* Temptations.

tations. And being back't with ſuch *mighty* Auxiliaries, how is it *poſſible* that we ſhould miſcarry, unleſs we are reſolved to betray *our ſelves*, and give fire to the *fatal* Trains of our Enemies; and if we are ſo bent there is no Remedy for our Obſtinacy, and it is *juſt* and *fit* we ſhould be left to the *diſmal* and *pitileſs* Effects of *our own* Folly and Madneſs. For if, when we ſee our ſelves in ſo much danger, and it is yet in our Power to eſcape if we pleaſe, we will notwithſtanding *precipitate* our ſelves into Ruin; all the World muſt agree upon an *impartial* Inquiſition for the Blood of our Souls, that we *murdered* our ſelves, that *God* is *juſt*, and that his hands are *clean* from any ſtain of our Blood, and that *our own* Ruin is wholly owing to our own *invincible* Obſtinacy.

III. I proceed now to the *Third* Propoſition, *That our renouncing of Chriſt, and his Religion will moſt certainly infer the loſs of our Souls.* For, as I have ſhewed you, theſe Words are urged by our *Saviour* as a Motive to deter his Diſciples from forſaking him, as is plain from *Ver.* 24, 25. which neceſſarily ſuppoſes that upon their forſaking him this Loſs would moſt certainly and inevitably follow. In the Proſecution therefore of this Argument I ſhall endeavour theſe *two* things. 1. To

1. To ſhew you what that forſaking of Chriſt is, which Infers this Loſs.

2. Upon what Accounts our thus forſaking him infers it.

1. What that forſaking of *Chriſt* is, which infers this Loſs. To which I anſwer, there is a *Four-fold Forſaking of Chriſt*, which the *Scripture* takes notice of as *capital* and *damnable* to the Souls of Men.

1. When we *forſake* him by a *total* Apoſtacy.

2*ly*. When we cowardly *renounce* the Profeſſion of his Doctrine, or any Part of it, notwithſtanding we ſtill belive and are convinced of the Truth of it.

3. When by *obſtinate* Hereſy we either add to, or ſubtract from the Faith of *Chriſt*.

4*ly*. When by any *wilful* Courſe of Diſobedience we do vertually *renounce* the Authority of his Laws.

1. We loſe and forfeit our Souls, when we forſake Chriſt by a *total* Apoſtacy from him: When after we have been Baptized into his Name, and thereby have made a *viſible* Profeſſion of our believing his Doctrines, and obeying his Laws, we turn Runagadoes, and caſt *off* our Belief of the *one*, and diſown our Obligation to the *other*; we do moſt juſtly incur the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls. For ſo *ſtrong* and *co-*

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gent is the Evidence of *Chriſtianity*, that it is not to be ſuppoſed that any *profeſſed Chriſtian* can be either innocently or excuſably ſeduced into a Disbelief of it; For *Religion* being a Matter of the *vaſteſt* Moment and Concern, he is a Traytor to himſelf that either takes up his *Religion* without Examination, or that upon Examination refuſes to be ſwayed by the *ſtrongeſt* Reaſon; And I am ſure it is *impoſſible* for any *Chriſtian* to turn *Infidel* that is but ſo *honeſt* to himſelf as *firſt* to examine carefully the Reaſons of his Faith, and then to reſolve ſincerely not to reject it till better Reaſons appear to the contrary; But if either through their *wilful* Ignorance of the Evidence of *Chriſtianity*, or *vicious* Prejudice againſt the Purity of it, they ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced into *Apoſtacy*, they are *falſe* Traytors to themſelves, and as ſuch are juſtly *liable* to all thoſe *eternal* Damages they expoſe themſelves to. And hence it is ſaid of thoſe that *draw-back*, that is, *apoſtatize* from *Chriſtianity*, not only that God's Soul ſhall have *no pleaſure in them*, but alſo that they *draw back to perdition*, Heb. 10. 38, 39. and 2 Pet. 2.20. It is ſaid of thoſe *Apoſtates*, that *their later end is worſe than the beginning; and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment;*

ment; which implies that *Apoſtates* from *Chriſtianity* do not only forfeit their Souls, but that without Repentance they will be *for ever* forfeited to the moſt *wretched* Condition, even to the *nethermoſt* Degree of Perdition.

2*ly*. We loſe our Souls when notwithſtanding we do ſtill believe, and are convinced of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine, we do cowardly *renounce* the Profeſſion of it, or of any Part of it. For when once we have received the Faith of *Chriſt*, we are thereby obliged not to renounce the Profeſſion of it whatſoever Hazard it may expoſe us to, our *bleſſed Lord* having aſſured us that if we *deny him before Men, he will alſo deny us before his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 10. 33. And St. *Paul* alſo having warned us, *that if we deny Chriſt, he will alſo deny us*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. That is, that he will reject and abandon us before God and Angels to *everlaſting* Miſery and Damnation; for ſo St. *John* aſſures, *Rev.* 2. 8. that the *fearful* and *unbelieving*, *i. e.* the *faint-hearted* Cowards that for fear of Perſecution renounce the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, *ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone*. Not that in Times of Perſecution we are always bound to make an *actual* Profeſſion and Publication of our Faith, to

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run to the Tribunals of our Perſecutors before we are ſent for, and accuſe our ſelves of thoſe Doctrines for which we are Perſecuted; but whenever we are *apprehended*, *accuſed*, and *examined* by them, either upon knowledge or ſuſpicion, we are bound under the Penalty of *forfeiting* our Souls to *own* and *confeſs* our Faith, and not to deny any Doctrine or Article of it, whatſoever the Conſequence may be. For in this Caſe to deny our Belief is not only a *wilful* Lye, which is in it ſelf a *damnable* Crime, but an Act of *High-Treaſon* againſt our *Lord* and *Saviour*; for by renouncing any Doctrine which he hath revealed and committed to us, we do not only betray his Truſt, but blaſpheme his Veracity; to deny what we believe he hath revealed being in effect to declare him a Cheat and an Impoſtor. And having thus incurred the Guilt of ſo *black* a Treaſon againſt our *Saviour*, and wilfully perſiſting in it, what can we expect the Conſequence of it ſhould be, but the *eternal* Loſs and Perdition of our Souls?

3*ly*. We forſake *Chriſt* to the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by *obſtinate* Hereſy we add to, or ſubtract from that *Heavenly* Doctrine which he hath revealed to us. By *Hereſy* I do not mean barely a *falſe* Opinion in our *Religion*, whether it be of

of *greater* or *leſſer* Moment; for I doubt not but the ſame Error may be an *innocent* Miſtake in *one* Man, and a *damnable* Hereſy in *another*; that in the *one* it may be the Effect of a *weak* Underſtanding, but in the *other*, of a *perverſe* and *obſtinate* Will; and when the Underſtanding miſleads the Will it is Weakneſs, but when the Will miſleads the Underſtanding it is Wickedneſs. For *ſimple* Error is only a defect of Underſtanding, which in a *fallible* Creature is every whit as *inculpable* as Sickneſs in a *mortal one*; but Hereſy is a Fault of the Will, which is the only Subject of Vertue and Vice. When therefore by the *wicked* Prejudice of our *corrupt* Wills againſt the Purity of *Chriſtianity*, our Underſtanding is betrayed into *looſe* and *erroneous* Principles; when we underſtand by our *vicious* Affections, and adapt our Opinions to the Intereſts of our Luſts; when we believe for the ſake of any *darling* Vice, and ſuffer *our own factious*, *covetous*, and *extravagant* Paſſions either to tempt us to profeſs thoſe *erroneous* Opinions which we do not believe, or to prejudice us into a Belief of them; then is our Error no longer to be attributed to the Weakneſs of our Underſtanding, but to the Wickedneſs of our Wills which Improves our Error into a *damnable* Hereſy. For he would be a *wicked*

ed Man, though he were not an Heretick, that harbours thoſe *ſinful* Luſts which betrayed him into Hereſy; but by being an Heretick he is much more *wicked*, becauſe now he is *wicked* under a Pretence of Religion, and cloaks his Impieties with the Garments of Righteouſneſs. And what *greater* Prophaneſs can any Man be guilty of, than to make his *Religion* a Baud to procure for his Luſts? So that if out of a *vicious* Propenſion of Will we obſtinately perſiſt in any *Religious* Errors, we are not only guilty of that *wicked* Propenſion which is of it ſelf *ſufficient* to ruin our Souls; but we are alſo *accountable* for *vitiating* our *Religion* with thoſe *erroneous* Mixtures by which we have rendered it a Shelter and Protection to our Luſt. And what the Conſequence of this will be St. *Jude* will inform us, who ſpeaking of *certain* Hereticks, who to gratifie their own *wicked* Inclinations, had *ſophiſticated Chriſtianity* with ſundry *black* and *poiſonous* Principles, pronounces this *fearful* Doom on them; *for whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, ver. 13.

4*ly*. And laſtly, We forſake *Chriſt* to the Loſs and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by any *wilful* Courſe of Diſobedience we do virtually renounce the Authority of his Laws. For whilſt we continue in any Courſe

Courſe of *wilful* Sin, we live in an *open* Rebellion to our *Saviour*, and do by our Actions declare that we will not have him to Reign over us. And accordingly *Tit.*1.16. the *abominable* and *diſobedient* are ſaid to *deny God in their works*, even while they profeſs *to know him*; and what the Fate of ſuch will be, St. *Paul* hath forewarned us, *Rom.* 2. 8, 9. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.* And the ſame *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of theſe *obſtinate* Rebels, who live and perſiſt in an *open* Defiance to our Saviour's Authority, tells us that *they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord*, 2 Theſ. 1. 8, 9. But before we diſmiſs this Argument, it will be requiſite more particularly to explain what thoſe *wilful* Courſes of Sin are by which they thus renounce him; all which may be reduced to theſe *three* Heads. *Firſt*, We renounce the Authority of his Laws, when we ſin againſt him out of *wilful* Ignorance of them. *Secondly*, When we ſin on againſt him out of *wilful* Inconſideration of our Obligation to them. *Thirdly*, When we perſiſt in our ſin againſt Knowledge and Conſideration.

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1. We vertually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we ſin on againſt him out of *wilful* Ignorance of his Laws. For the Laws of our *Saviour*, in which the great Lines of our Duty are deſcribed, are ſo *plain* and *legible*, that no man can be long excuſably *ignorant* of them. But if our Ignorance proceed either *firſt* from a *profane* and *profligate* Mind that is altogether regardleſs of *God*, and hath utterly worn *off* its *natural* ſenſe of Religion, and ſo neither heeds it nor concerns it ſelf about it, but is become quite *deaf* to all the Means of Inſtruction; or if it proceed, *Secondly*, from the *vicious* Prejudice of our Wills, and we Induſtriouſly ſet our ſelves, for the ſake of ſome *darling* Luſt, to exclude from our Minds all the Means of Conviction; and either ſtudiouſly to avoid all thoughts of *Religion*, that ſo we may ſin on without diſturbance, which is the way of thoſe that are openly *Profane* and *Irreligious*; or to uſe all *poſſible* Arts to wheedle our Underſtandings into the Belief of ſuch Principles as are moſt *indulgent* to our Luſts, which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *falſe Pretenders* to *Religion:* If, I ſay, our Ignorance of Chriſt's Laws proceeds from either of theſe Cauſes, it will no more excuſe our falling into ſin, than the want of Light will a man's

falling into a Ditch that ſhuts his Eyes at Noon, and winks on purpoſe leſt he ſhould ſee, and eſcape the Danger that is before him. But then

2*ly*. We vertually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we ſin on againſt him out of a *wilful* Inconſideration of our Obligations to obey him. For we being *reaſonable* Creatures, are bound by the very Conſtitution of our Natures to act conſideratlely, eſpecially in matters of *Religion* which are of the *greateſt* Moment and Importance to us; ſo that if we miſcarry herein through *wilful* Inconſideration, we are every whit as *inexcuſable* as if we had conſiderately betrayed our ſelves. Now *wilful* Inconſideration is either *actual* or *habitual*; *Actual*, is either, *firſt* when notwithſtanding we have been ſufficiently warned by *precedent* Surprizes, we take no care for the *future*; for though it cannot be expected we ſhould always keep ſo *ſtrict* a Guard upon our ſelves, as never to be ſurprized by an Enemy; yet when we have been overtaken, there is all the Reaſon in the World we ſhould take warning by it, and grow more *wary* and *vigilant* for the future; that we ſhould awaken in our Minds ſuch Conſiderations as are *neceſſary* to prevent our being ſurpized again, which if we do not, our

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next Surprize will be *inexcuſable.* And if the ſenſe of the *Lapſe* which was perhaps but an *innocent* Error, or at moſt but a Sin of Infirmity, doth not make us more *careful* of our ſelves for the future; the *next* will be a *wilful* Fall: Or elſe in the ſecond Place, this *actual wilful* Inconſideration is, when upon the *preſenting* of any *beloved* Temptation we either quench the *good* Motions of our Minds, and refuſe to conſider the Evil and Danger of the Sin we are tempted to, leſt we ſhould be thereby deterred from committing it; or purpoſely contrive to baffle *our own* Conſideration by oppoſing it either with ſome *ungrounded* Hope of Impunity, or ſome *fallacious* Promiſe of *future* Amendment; and if to make way for our ſin, we do either of theſe ways wilfully drive all good thoughts from our Minds leſt they ſhould diſturb and interrupt us in the Injoyment of it, our Inconſideration is to be reſolved into the Wickedneſs of our Wills, and not into the Weakneſs and Infirmity of our Natures. And he that will not conſider becauſe he will ſin, and afterwards extenuate his ſin by his Inconſideration, urges *one* ſin in excuſe for another, and makes that which is his Fault, his Apology. Whenſoever therefore we ſin out of any *actual* and *wilful* Inconſideration, we

ſin wilfully, and conſequently do thereby vertually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*; the *final* Event of which, without our Repentance, will be our *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition. But then beſides this *actual* there is alſo an *habitual* Inconſideration, which is *wilful*; and that is, when by often ſtifling the Convictions of our Conſciences we have ſeared them into a *deep* Inſenſibility of *Good* and *Evil*, ſo as that now we ſin on without any Remorſe or Reluctancy, and return to our Luſts with the ſame indifferency as we do to our Beds or our Tables, without either conſidering what we are doing, or reflecting on what we have done; And this is ſo far from palliating our ſin, that it is one of the *higheſt* Aggravations of it: For as it is no excuſe that we ſin out of an *evil* Habit which we voluntarily contracted by *frequent* Acts of ſin, ſo neither will it at all excuſe us that we ſin out of an *habitual* Inconſideration which we *wilfully* contracted by often refuſing to conſider. But as *vicious* Habits have a *proper* Evil and Guiltineſs in them *diſtinct* from thoſe *vicious* Acts that produced them; ſo *habitual* Inconſideration hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own beyond what was in thoſe *actual* Inconſiderations whereby it was acquired. And accordingly it is deſcribed in the *Scripture* as the

the *worſt*, the moſt *deſperate* and *incurable* ſtate of a Sinner: It is called a *reprobate-Mind*, Rom. 1. 28,29. *a ſeared Conſcience*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. *a hard and unrelenting heart that treaſureth up wrath againſt the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. So that if we go on in ſin without conſidering, with a Mind habitually *regardleſs* & *inſenſible*, we are *hardned* and *inveterate* Rebels, that have not only renounced the Authority of our *Saviour*, but have alſo forfeited our Selves, and that almoſt irreparably againſt all his Methods of conquering and ſubduing us. But then

3*ly*. And Laſtly, We vertually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we perſiſt in our ſin againſt *Knowledge* and *Conſideration*. For to ſin on obſtinately againſt *Knowledge* & *Conſideration*, argues an *invincible* Malice of Will; for tho the Condition of the *ignorant* and *inconſiderate* Sinner be very *ſad* and *deplorable*, yet there is much more Hope of him becauſe he hath never yet the Force & Efficacy of *Knowledge* & *Conſideration*, which perhaps, if ever he be brought to experience, may *prove* a *ſucceſful* Means of his Cure and Reformation. But the *knowing* and *conſiderate* Sinner hath tryed and conquered the Remedy, hath experimented the only means of his Cure, and yet it grows *worſe* and *worſe* under the Application; he knows what his ſin is, and conſiders the Conſequence of it, and yet ſins on; which argues a *deſperate* Reſolution of Will in him

thus to run himſelf upon a *foreſeen* Ruin, and leap into *Hell* with his Eyes open. And what Hope is there of diſſuading *him* from his ſin, that knows and conſiders the Arguments againſt it, and yet every day breaks through them all at the Call of every *ſinful* Temptation? And as his Condition is moſt *deſperate*, ſo his Soul is moſt *guilty* and *criminal*; for every Act of his ſin is an *open* Defiance to the Authority of *God* and his *Saviour*; his Rebellion is *barefac'd*, and hath no manner of Pretence wherein to maſk or diſguiſe it ſelf; and he knows and owns himſelf to be in a Rebellion, and yet perſeveres in it, which extreamly aggravates and inhanſes the Guilt of it. For the *Sinfulneſs* and *Immorality* of Actions is to be meaſured by the Degrees of Will that are in them, and the Degrees of Will in them are *more* or *leſs* proportionably, as the Nature and Evil of them is *more* or *leſs* known and conſidered. Hence is that of St. *James* 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin.* Had he not known the Nature of his Action, the Weakneſs of his Underſtanding would have excuſed the Error of his Will, and render'd it *pardonable* at leaſt, if not altogether *innocent*: But when his Underſtanding hath diſcharged its Office, and ſhewed him the Evil that he ought

ought to avoid, *that* hath fairly acquitted its ſelf, and can ſtand no longer *chargable* for his Miſcarriages: So that now the Man chooſes at his own Peril, and if he ſtill chooſe what he ought to avoid, his Underſtanding is *clear*, and his Will alone is *Culpable*. And when our Rebellion againſt our *Saviour* is not only *wilful*, but the *wilfulneſs* of it is ſo extreamly *aggravated* by our Knowledge and Conſideration, what the Conſequence of it will be that *fearful* Paſſage will aſſure us, *Luke* 12. 47. *The Servant that knoweth his Maſters will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* And thus I have endeavoured to repreſent to you what that Forſaking of Chriſt is, which expoſes us to the Hazard of loſing our Souls.

II. I proceed in the *next* Place to ſhew you upon what Accounts it is that our *forſaking of Chriſt* infers this *fearful* Loſs; of which, I ſhall Briefly give you this *four-fold* Account.

1. Our thus *forſaking of Chriſt* infers the Loſs of our Souls, as it is a moſt *inexcuſable* Contempt of the *greateſt* Mercy.

2*ly*. As it renders us the moſt *unfitting* Objects of Mercy for the future.

3*ly*. As it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *ſtated* Condition of Mercy.

4*ly*. As it is an *utter* Rejection of our *laſt* Remedy.

1. Our forſaking of Chriſt by any of the *aforenamed* Inſtances infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it is a moſt *inexcuſable* Contempt of the *greateſt* Mercy. For when the *Son* of *God* came down from *Heaven*, he brought from thence with him the *largeſt* Offers of Mercy that *Heaven* it ſelf could make to a *ſinful* World; he did not only bring down with him a Grant of *univerſal* Pardon and Indemnity under the *Broad-Seal* of *Heaven* for every Sinner that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Allegiance, together with the moſt *endearing* Invitations of the *God* of *Heaven* to *woo* and *win* us to accept it; but he alſo brought along with him all that an *everlaſting* Heaven means, Crowns of *Immortal* Glory and Pleaſure to encourage us to, and reward our Acceptance of them. And what greater Mercy could the *God* of *Heaven* have expreſſed to us, than to ſend down his *bleſſed Son*, not only to tender to us an Indemnity, but alſo to invite us to accept it with a Promiſe of Heaven? So that if now we reject him, now he is come to us with ſuch *vaſt* and *endearing* Propoſals, what an *intolerable* ſlight will it be to the tender Mercies of *God*? When we ſhall declare by our Actions that we will not exchange the ſordid Pleaſures of our Luſt for the Pardon of *Heaven*,

ven, for the Favour of *God*, and for all the Hopes of a *glorious* Immortality? How can we expect any *farther* Relief from God's Mercy, after we have put ſuch an *intolerable* Affront upon it by preferring ſuch an *unworthy* Rival before it? When *God* hath laid his Pardon, his Love, and his *Heaven* in our Way to ſtop us in our *ſinful* Courſes, what a *barbarous* Indignity will it be to trample upon them all, and run over them into Hell? With what Face can we hope for any *farther* kindneſs from *Heaven*, after we have treated its Kindneſs with ſo much Rudeneſs and Contempt? Certainly for *ſinful* Men to reject and run away from their *Saviour*, when he comes to them with ſo much Kindneſs, when he courts them with ſuch *aſtoniſhing* Expreſſions of Mercy, is a Provocation *ſufficient* to incenſe an *infinite* Goodneſs, and turn the *tendereſt* Mercy into an *implacable* Fury. And when *infinite* Love is ſo infinitely provoked, what leſs Expiation can it claim and exact, than the *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition of our Souls?

2*ly*. Our *Forſaking of Chriſt* infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it renders us the moſt *incapable* Objects of Mercy for the future. For when once we are arrived to that Height of Wickedneſs as finally to reject *Chriſt*, and the Mercies of his *Goſpel*, there

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is no farther Mercy that we are *capable* of; if after this God ſhould be ſo *kind* and *indulgent* as to pardon us, alas! what would it ſignify? for we ſhould ſtill be *wretched* and *miſerable* in Deſpight of his Pardon; and that *wicked* Temper of Mind which made us reject our *Saviour*, would be an *everlaſting* Hell to us though it ſhould indemnify us. What will a Pardon avail a Man that is dying of the *Stone* or *Strangury?* he can but die if he be not pardoned, and die he muſt though he be. And as *little* Advantage it would be to a *wicked* Soul to be pardoned and abſolved by *God*, while ſhe hath a Diſeaſe within her that preys upon her Vitals, and haſtens her to a *certain* Ruin. She could have been but *miſerable* in the *future* Life if ſhe had not been pardoned, and *miſerable* ſhe muſt be if ſhe continues *wicked*, whether ſhe be pardoned or no; there being an *everlaſting Hell* in the very Nature of Wickedneſs, which no *outward* Act of Pardon can quench or extinguiſh. Nay, if after our rejecting *Chriſt*, and the Mercies of the *Goſpel*, God ſhould not only pardon but admit us into *Heaven*, and indulge us the *free* Enjoyment of all its Pleaſures and Felicities; yet that *vicious* Temper of Mind which finally *ſeduced* us from our *Saviour*, would render us for ever *incapable* of reliſh-

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ing the Joys of it. Thoſe Rivers of *Heavenly* Pleaſure would never agree with the *helliſh* Temper of our Minds, which, like a *feveriſh* Tongue, would utterly diſguſt their *delicious* Streams by Reaſon of its own *overflowing* Gall. So that after we have finally rejected our Saviour, we are neither *capable* of being indemnifyed from *Hell*, nor of enjoying *Heaven*; and having caſt our ſelves beyond the Reach of all Mercy into a State wherein we can neither begin to be *happy*, nor ceaſe to be *miſerable*, our Caſe is *deſperate*, and there is no Remedy but our Souls muſt be loſt and undone *for ever*.

3*ly*. Our forſaking of *Chriſt* infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *ſtated* Condition of Mercy. The *fixed* and *immoveable* Condition of the Mercy of the *Goſpel* is, that we ſhould conſtantly adhere to our *Saviour* by a *true* Faith and a *ſincere* Obedience, and that whenever we fall *off* from him either into Infidelity, or Hereſy, or Diſobedience, we ſhould remember from whence we are fallen, and return again to him by a *deep* and *ſerious* Repentance. And indeed this Condition is ſo *low* and *condeſcending*, that it was *impoſſible* for the *wiſe* God and Governour of the World, to propoſe his Mercy to us at a *lower* or *eaſier* Rate; and if God ſhould have

have asked our Conſent upon what Conditions he ſhould propoſe to us the Mercies of his *Goſpel*, this would have been the *utmoſt* Favour that we could in Modeſty have craved of him, that he would be ſo gracious as to accept our *unfeigned* Faith and *ſincere* Obedience; and that whenever we fall off either from the *one* or the *other*, he would admit us to Repentance, and receive us again upon our Return and Amendment. And ſhould he have propoſed his Mercy to us upon any *lower* Terms, he muſt of Neceſſity have let go the Reins of his Government, and given us a *free* Toleration for all manner of Wickedneſs. Had the Condition of his Mercy been but one ſtep *lower* than Repentance, it had totally diſſolved the Obligation of his Laws, and reduced the *humane* World into a *perfect Anarchy*. For ſhould he have proſtituted his Mercy to *impenitent* Sinners, he muſt have made it a Refuge for *obſtinate* Rebels to fly to, and ſhelter themſelves from the Reach of his Authority; and how *inconſiſtent* would this have been with the Wiſdom of his Government? This therefore being the *loweſt* Condition upon which the *wiſe* and *holy God* can propoſe his Mercy to us, there is no Ground to hope that after we have rejected *this*, and are finally fallen *off* from it, he will make any

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new Propoſal to us. For he hath yielded as much already to the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of our Natures, as he could poſſibly do with ſafety to his Government; and if this will not ſuffice, we may depend upon it that he will rather conſent to ſacrifice our Souls to his *righteous* Vengeance, than his *own* Authority to our *obſtinate* Wills. So that when once we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, and ſhaken hands *for ever* with Faith and Obedience, and Repentance too, we are quite beyond the Reach of any *wiſe* Mercy; and then how *deplorable* muſt our Condition be, when Things are reduced to this *deſperate* Iſſue, That God muſt either conſent to be fooliſhly *merciful* to us, or to abandon our Souls to *everlaſting* Perdition?

4*ly*. And laſtly, Our *forſaking of Chriſt* infers the *everlaſting* Loſs of our Souls, as it is an *utter* Rejection of our *laſt* Remedy. For the *laſt* Remedy which *God* hath prepared for Mankind to heal the Malignity of their Natures, and recover them from *eternal* Miſery, is the *meritorious* Death and Sacrifice of his *bleſſed Son*, who voluntarily undertaking to be the *Attorney-General*, and *Common Repreſentative* of *ſinful* Men, ſuffered Death in our ſtead as a *vicarious* Mulct and Puniſhment for our Sins; upon which the moſt *merciful* Father hath granted to all *believing*

lieving and *truly penitent* Sinners, a *general* Indemnity from *eternal* Puniſhments, to which they were bound over by their Sins and Rebellions; by virtue of which Grant as ſoon as we believe in *Chriſt*, and do thereupon ſincerely repent of our Sins, we are totally abſolved from thoſe *everlaſting* Puniſhments whereunto they have expoſed and obliged us. And this Sacrifice of *Chriſt* being the laſt Remedy which *God* hath provided for our *Guilt*, and the Grant of Pardon which *God* hath made in Conſideration of it, being confined to *believing* and *penitent* Sinners, it hence neceſſarily follows, that they who finally perſiſt in *Unbelief* or *Impenitency*, do thereby *for ever* cut themſelves off from all Intereſt in that Sacrifice; and from all Title to that Pardon that is granted upon it, and conſequently leave themſelves *for ever* deſtitute of all Hope of Pardon and Indemnity for the future. So that by renouncing *Chriſt* we do renounce his Sacrifice, which is the *laſt* and *only* Remedy we have to depend upon. Hence *Heb.* 10. 26. we are told, that *if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin*; that is, if after we have been baptized, and initiated into *Chriſtianity*, we relapſe into Infidelity or *wilful* Diſobedience, we do thereby forfeit our Intereſt in Chriſt's

Chriſt's Sacrifice; and when we have once rejected our Intereſt in that, there remains no other Sacrifice for Sin, *i. e.* no other Sacrifice upon which *God* will pardon and indemnify us. So that now all that remains to us, is that which follows in the next Verſe, *viz. A certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries.* For when we have finally baffled our *laſt* and *utmoſt* Remedy, the Condition of our Souls muſt needs be *deſperate* and *incurable.* When by our *obſtinate* Unbelief or *final* Impenitence we have *outſinned* the Virtue of our Saviour's Sacrifice, we are out of the Reach and Compaſs of God's Pardon, and ſo conſequently are ſunk beyond all Hopes of Recovery, into *endleſs* and *irreverſible* Damnation. For now that *precious* Blood which, if we had believed and repented, would have ſpoke *better* things for us than the Blood of *Abel*, will riſe in Judgment againſt us, and, like the Blood of thoſe Souls that are under the Altar, will charge and impeach, and be continually imprecating the Vengeance of *Heaven* upon us. And when that which was prepared for the *laſt* and *utmoſt* Remedy of our Souls ſhall be converted into their Bane, and that which was intended for their Advocate ſhall become their Accuſer; when that *vocal* Blood

and

and those *speaking* Wounds which pleaded for, shall plead against, and cry out instantly for Judgment upon them; what can they henceforth expect but *everlasting* Ruin and Destruction?

What then remains, that since our *forsaking of Christ* will so infallibly infer the Ruin of our Souls, we all return to, and cleave *fast* to our *Saviour* in our Belief and Obedience: That we, who are fallen *off* from him into a Course of *wilful* Sin and Disobedience, immediately return again by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. For the Way in which we are walking leads directly to Destruction; every Step of it is a Descent into Hell, and next to the *lowermost* is the *bottomless* Pit, and for all we know, the very *last* Step we took brought us to the Brinks of the flaming Abyss; and if it did, one Step further will set us beyond all Hope of Recovery. For in our *sinful* Progress we are wading forwards in a *shelving Pool*, which the farther we go, the *deeper* it is, and so *deeper* and *deeper* till we come to the Bottom of it; so that at every Step we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging our selves into an *irrecoverable* Ruin; for we know not how soon we may be snatched away in our Iniquities; and if it should so happen, that after we have sinned

this

this Moment, we ſhould die the next, this will determin our *everlaſting* Fate, and ſink us into *eternal* Miſery.

Wherefore as we tender the ſafety of our *precious* Souls, let us ſpeedily forſake this *dangerous* Road in which Perdition *way-lays*, and *Hell* gapes to devour us every ſtep we go; and return unto our Lord in whom our ſafety lyes. As yet the Opportunity of Salvation is in our Hands, but before to morrow Morning it may ſlip away from between our Fingers, and vaniſh *for ever*, and we that are *this* day wallowing in our Sins, may before the *next* be roaring in *Hell*. So that while we defer and put *off* our Repentance from day to day, we do as it were caſt Lots for our Souls, and venture our *everlaſting* Hopes upon a Contingency, that is not in our Power to diſpoſe of. As yet the Gate of Mercy is open to us, and our *bleſſed Lord* ſtands ready with his Arms *out-ſtretched* to welcome and receive us; but for all we know if we enter not preſently, the Gate may be ſhut within a *few* Moments, and then though we knock and cry till our hearts ake, *Lord, Lord open to us*, we ſhall receive no *other* Anſwer, but *Depart from me I know you not*. *O good God*, how are we beſotted then, that rather than begin our Repentance *to day* we will wilfully run the

Hazard of being eternally *miſerable* before to *morrow Morning!* For if this ſhould be the *Evening* of our day of Tryal, as for all we know it may, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing; and therefore one would think it ſhould highly concern us wiſely to manage this laſt ſtake, the *winning* or *loſing* whereof may prove our *making* or *undoing*. In pity therefore to our *periſhing* Souls let us return to our *Saviour*, before it be *too late*, before our *Feet ſtumble on the dark Mountains*, and we fall down into *everlaſting* Darkneſs. And being returned and reunited to him, let us have a Care we do not revolt again; for if we draw back we cancel our Repentance, and forfeit all its *bleſſed* Fruits and Benefits; and unleſs we ſtedfaſtly perſevere and hold out to the end, all the Pains we have taken in our Chriſtian Courſe will be *for ever* loſt, and the Remembrance of it will only adminiſter to our *future* Miſery. For how will it vex us in the *other* World to conſider the Labour it coſt us to take *Heaven* by ſtorm? How vigorouſly we ſtrove to mount the *Scaling Ladder*, through how many Difficulties we had forced our way to that height of Vertue and Religion we were arrived to, and then when we are got as it were to the *topmoſt* Rounds, and had laid

our

our Hands upon the Battlements of *Heaven*, juſt ready to leap in and take poſſeſſion of all its Joys; how baſely we let go our Hold, and ſo tumbled down from that *ſtupendious* height into the *bottomleſs* Abyſs of *endleſs* Miſery? Doubtleſs this Conſideration muſt neceſſarily ſting our *woful* Souls hereafter, and *for ever* inrage them againſt themſelves. Wherefore as we value the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us, who by our *wilful* Rebellions have gone aſtray, return, and conſtantly adhere to our *bleſſed Saviour*. Alas, where can we be *happier* than in his Service, who impoſeth nothing on us but what contributes to our Welfare? Where can we be *ſafer* than in his Arms, and under his Protection, who hath the Command and Diſpoſal of all Events, and to whom all Power is given in *Heaven* and Earth? Where can we be placed more to *our own* Advantage than under his Guidance and Authority, who never permits any to ſerve him for nought, but hath engaged himſelf to recompence our Labour with a Crown of Glory that fades not away? And is it not *ſtrange* that after ſo many *advantagious* Invitations, we ſhould need to be *ſcared* to our Duty? that after our *bleſſed Maſter* hath enjoyned us ſuch a *reaſonable*, *gentle*, and infinitely *beneficial* Service, he ſhould be forced

to terrify us into it with the Flames of Hell?

IV. I proceed now to the *Fourth* Propoſition, *That when the Soul is loſt, 'tis loſt irrecoverably*; where the *Greek* word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is uſed in the *ſame* ſenſe with ἱλασμα, which ſignifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that when once a Man hath ſold his Soul to Perdition, it is *unredeemable*, and that no Price will be accepted for its Ranſom and Deliverance; when a Man's Soul is in *Hell* under the wretched Bondage of a *damned* Spirit, how *little* ſoever he regards it now, he would give all the World, if it were in his power, to be releaſed again; but if he had a *thouſand* Worlds it will not do, his Bondage being ſuch as will admit no Ranſom. For theſe Words of our *Saviour* ſeem to have been a *common Proverb* of the Age he lived in, and that derived from thoſe words of the Devil in *Job*, *All that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*; that is, when a Man is dying, he would willingly part with all to redeem his Life, but all will not do. Which *Proverb* our *Saviour* adapts to his *own* Argument, in which he proceeds from *temporal* to *eternal* Life: If a Man would give ſo much for his *temporal* Life, what would he not

not give for his *eternal* one? But as our *temporal* Life is not to be redeemed, ſo neither is our *eternal* one when once it is loſt; for when once our Soul is *loſt* or *abandoned* to the State of the Damned, it is *loſt for ever*, and there is no ἀντάλλαγμα, or Ranſom that will be accepted of by *God* for its Redemption thence. In the Proſecution of which Argument I ſhall endeavour theſe two things:

1. To ſhew you that if *God* be ſo determined he may, without any Injury either to his *Juſtice* or *Goodneſs*, detain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and abſolutely refuſe to accept any Ranſom for them.

2. That he is actually determined ſo to do.

1. That if God be ſo determined, he may without any Injury either to his Juſtice or Goodneſs, detain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, without accepting any Ranſom for them. And this I doubt not will plainly appear upon the *due* Conſideration of theſe *following* Propoſitions.

1*ſt*. That God being the *Sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impoſe Laws upon all *other* Beings.

2*dly*. That having this Right, he may juſtly inforce thoſe Laws with whatſoever Penalties he ſees *neceſſary* or *convenient*.

3*dly.* That when thoſe Laws he impoſes are for the *good* of his Subjects, it is not only *Juſtice* but *Goodneſs* in him to inforce them with the *ſevereſt* Penalty.

4*thly.* That the Penalty of *eternal* Bondage under Miſery, is the *ſevereſt* and moſt *effectual* Way to inforce thoſe *beneficial* Laws, and oblige us to the Obſervance of them.

5*thly.* That if *God* think *good* to inforce his Laws with this Penalty, he hath as much Right to *exact* it when we diſobey, as he had to *threaten* and *impoſe* it.

6*thly.* That his *actual* exacting of it can no more impeach his *Goodneſs*, than his *threatning* and *denouncing* it.

1. That God being the *Sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impoſe Laws upon all *other* Beings. For he being the *greateſt* and moſt *powerful* Being, can himſelf be *ſubject* to no *other* Law but only that of his *own* Nature; and his *Power* being *infinite* and *unconfined* as well as his *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs*, doth ſufficiently warrant him to do whatſoever is *conſiſtent* with them. For to be ſure a Being of infinite Power and Greatneſs, can have no Superior, but muſt be neceſſarily exalted above all *other* Authorities by this *incommunicable* Prerogative of his Nature; and being raiſed above all Authorities, he muſt

muſt have Authority above all, and his *eſſential* Dominion having no *other* Law to bound it, but only that of his own Nature, he muſt neceſſarily have a Right to command whatſoever is *conſiſtent* with his *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs*. His *Will* therefore being by the *infinite* Pre-eminence of his Power and Greatneſs *ſupreme*, all *other* Wills are obliged to bow before, and proſtrate themſelves to its *Sovereign* Authority; and there is no Law whatſoever but he may juſtly impoſe upon them, provided it be not *repugnant* to that *ſupreme* Law that is founded in his *own* Nature. This therefore being premiſed, that God hath a Right as he is the *Sovereign* Being to give Laws to all other Beings; it hence follows,

2*dly*. That he may juſtly inforce thoſe Laws with whatſoever Penalties he ſees *neceſſary* or *convenient*. For Laws without Penalties are rather Petitions than Commands; and unleſs they carry force enough with them to *over-aw* the Subject, and make themſelves obeyed, they want the *formal* Sanction and Obligation of a Law. To have a Power therefore of impoſing Penalties muſt neceſſarily be *inſeparable* from the Power of making Laws, becauſe they are the Penalties that make the Laws to oblige, that give them Power to command, and in-

force them with an *awful* Authority. And as the Power of giving Laws ſuppoſes the Power of impoſing Penalties, ſo it ſuppoſes a Power of impoſing ſuch Penalties as may be *ſufficient* to incline and aw the Subject into Obedience, againſt all Reaſons to the contrary. For unleſs the Penalty be *great* enough to *outweigh* all other Conſiderations, the Law which it inforces will be extreamly *defective* in Point of Obligation, and leave the Subject as much reaſon to diſobey as to obey. *God* therefore being by his own *natural* Right the *Supreme* Lawgiver of the World, muſt be ſuppoſed to have an *equal* Right of inforcing his Laws with ſuch Penalties as in his own *infinite* Wiſdom he ſhall think *neceſſary* to oblige his Creatures to obey him; and there is no Penalty can be too *rigorous* or *ſevere* which is *neceſſary* to inable his Laws to oblige and command us. Wherefore according as he ſees his Subjects *more* or *leſs* tempted, or inclined to diſobey him, ſo he will need *greater* or *leſs* Penalties to oblige us to Obedience; and therefore foreſeeing what a *ſtrong* Propenſity to Evil there would be in our Nature, and with what *importunate* Temptations this would be excited and wrought upon, he could not but foreſee that the *ſevereſt* Penalties would be neceſſary to back and inforce his Laws,

and

and being *neceſſary* for that end, he muſt needs have a Right to impoſe them, how *ſevere* ſoever they might be; nor is this Severity leſs *good*, than it is *juſt*; conſidering,

3*dly*. That when thoſe Laws he impoſes are for the *good* of his Subjects, it is not only an Act of Juſtice in him to impoſe them with the *ſevereſt* Penalties, but of Goodneſs. And this is really the Caſe as to thoſe Laws which *God* hath impoſed upon us; for the Matter of them all is ſomething tending to our good, ſomething or other that is *perfective* of our Natures, and conducive to our Happineſs; and being ſo, the *greater* the Penalty is which they are backt and inforced with, the *greater* Demonſtration it is of God's Care and Zeal for our Happineſs. For the End of Penalty is to oblige us to Obedience; and when all Obedience is for our *good*, the more ſtrictly he obliges us to it, the more he befriends us. When a *diſtracted* Man is endeavouring to miſchief and deſtroy himſelf, it is Kindneſs to bind him though it be with Chains of Iron. When therefore *God* found us ſo *prone* to injure our ſelves by *wicked* and *miſchievous* Actions, it was Mercy to bind our Hands with his Threatnings of Puniſhment; and the *ſtronger* his Bands are, the more they expreſs his Kindneſs; becauſe the more they oblige us

to

to be *kind* to *our ſelves*, and *true* to *our own* Intereſt. And certainly for *God* to lay us under the *ſtrongeſt* Obligations to be *happy*, is ſo far from being a Blemiſh to his Goodneſs, that it is a moſt *glorious* Expreſſion of it; but if we will be ſo *obſtinate* as to run into the mouth of thoſe Threatnings which he hath levelled againſt us to ſcare us into Happineſs, it is *juſt* with him to diſcharge them upon us, and make us feel the Effects of our Folly and Madneſs. Since therefore the Reaſon of the Penalty wherewith *God* hath inforced his Laws is to oblige us to be *happy*; and ſince the *greater* it is, the more force it muſt have to oblige us, it hence neceſſarily follows, that though it be not only a *great*, but an *eternal* one; yet it is not at all *inconſiſtent* with his Goodneſs; eſpecially if we conſider,

4*thly*. That the Penalty of *eternal* Miſery, as it is the *ſevereſt*, ſo it is the moſt *effectual* to inforce thoſe *beneficial* Laws which *God* hath impoſed on us, and to oblige us to the Obſervance of them. For to deter us from Sin, who are ſo vehemently prone to it, it was very requiſite that the Penalty denounced againſt it ſhould not only be *great* as to the Degree, but endleſs alſo as to the Duration of it; that ſo it might cut us *off* from all pretence of Preſumption, and leave us no ground

ground of Incouragement to be *wicked*. For we are exceeding *apt* to ſlight and undervalue thoſe *Evils* which are propoſed to deter us from the *Goods* which we vehemently deſire, eſpecially when theſe *Goods* are *preſent* and *ſenſible*, and thoſe *Evils future* and *inviſible*. For thus we conclude, the *Good* that is before us we may injoy a great while; and, which is very conſiderable, we may preſently enter upon the Poſſeſſion of it; but as for the *Evil* that is *conſequent* to it, it may be a long while before it befalls us; and when it doth, there is this Comfort, that it will at *laſt* have an end; and therefore let what will follow, let us ever ſeize the *preſent Good*, and make the *beſt* uſe we can of it; and as for the *future Evil*, whenever it happens, the Proſpect of its End, though it be never ſo *remote*, will enable us to bear it more chearfully. For *ten* Years *preſent* Pleaſure vehemently deſired, will far more effectually perſuade us, than a *future* Miſery of *double* the Duration; and therefore if the *future* Penalty denounced againſt our Sin were *finite* and *temporary*, it would not be *ſufficient* to ballance thoſe *preſent* Pleaſures with which we are continually importuned and ſollicited; for the Penalty being propoſed to deter us from Pleaſures which we dearly love, we are upon

on that account inclined to make as *light* of it as may be, and to flatter our ſelves with the *ſofteſt* and *eaſieſt* Repreſentations of it; ſo that to be ſure if there were any one *comfortable* Circumſtance in it, our Thoughts would preſently inſiſt upon that, and urge it as a Reaſon why we ſhould not be afraid of it. So that if the Penalty of our Sin had in it but the Circumſtance of being *finite*, to be ſure when ever it controuled our *vicious* Deſires, we ſhould ſtill make this a Pretence to deſpiſe it; *Well, let it be never ſo terrible, it will have an end.* Wherefore to inable it to terrify us effectually, it was requiſite that it ſhould not only be *great*, but *endleſs*; that it being ſtripped of all *tolerable* Circumſtances, we might be *able* to find nothing in it to qualify the Terror of it. But now it being not only *great* but *eternal*, the Threat of it, which, like a Cloud, hangs *lowering* over us, hath no *bright ſide* to divert our Thoughts from the Blackneſs and Horror of it; ſo that when-ever we think of it, and weigh it in the Ballance with our Sins, we muſt reſolve to forſake them, or chuſe to be *deſperate*. Since therefore an *eternal* Penalty was ſo neceſſary to inforce God's Law; and ſince his Law is for our *good*, it is *plain* that his ſo inforcing it can blemiſh neither his Juſtice nor Goodneſs.

Where-

Wherefore though we ſhould ſmart *for ever* for our Diſobedience hereafter, we can have no *juſt* Reaſon to complain of *God*; eſpecially conſidering,

5*thly*. That if *God* ſhall think *good* to inforce his Law with ſuch an *eternal* Penalty, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have as much Right to exact it upon our Diſobedience, as he had to threaten and impoſe it. For as *Supremacy* over all *other* Beings gives a Right to make Laws, and inforce them with Threatnings of Puniſhment; ſo when he hath actually impoſed Laws upon us, our Diſobedience to them gives a Right to inflict on us the Puniſhments which he threatned when he impoſed them. For in all *legal* Puniſhments the Right of Threatning them is founded on the Power of the *Sovereign*; but the Right of executing them in the Diſobedience of the *Subject*; and if the Penalty be ſuch, as that upon the Subjects Diſobedience the *Sovereign* cannot juſtly execute it, it was *unjuſt* for him to threaten it; for to threaten legally, is to claim a Right to puniſh upon Condition the Law be broken and violated; and that *Sovereign* who upon Condition of the Subjects Diſobedience, claims a Right to *more* Puniſhment than he can juſtly exact of him when he diſobeys, pretends to *more* Right than he really hath, and ſo by conſequence

quence his Claim is *unrighteous*. If therefore by the Threat of his Law *God* may juſtly claim á Right to puniſh us *for ever* if we diſobey, then doubtleſs when we have actually diſobeyed, he may as juſtly exact it, and doth no more exceed his Right when he inflicts what he threatned, than he did when he threatned to inflict it. If he had Right to ſay, *I will puniſh you for ever upon Condition you tranſgreſs my Laws*, then upon our performing that Condition he muſt neceſſarily have Right to do as he ſaid. So that our tranſgreſſing his Law being a *ſufficient* Condition for him to found a *rightful* Claim to puniſh us *eternally*, by our doing this Condition we juſtly forfeit our ſelves to *eternal* Puniſhment, and by *our own* Act and Deed voluntarily reſign up our *precious* Souls to the *juſt* laſh of an *everlaſting* Vengeance; which as the *Juſtice* of *God* is no way obliged to ſuſpend, ſo neither is his *Goodneſs*, which now is our only Reſerve; conſidering,

6thly. And laſtly, That God's exacting this *eternal* Penalty of us can no more impeach his *Goodneſs* than his threatning and denouncing it. That it is highly *conſiſtent* with his Goodneſs to threaten it, I have already proved; but if it were not alſo *conſiſtent* therewith to inflict it, to be ſure his own

own Wiſdom would never admit him to threaten it. For to what end ſhould he threaten to act contrary to the *Goodneſs* of his Nature? Either he muſt deſign to make us believe that he intends to act, or not; if the *firſt*, he muſt thereby deſign to abuſe, and miſrepreſent himſelf in the Opinion of his Creatures, to blemiſh the Reputation, and expoſe the Honour of his own *infinite* Goodneſs. But if he did not deſign to make us believe it, to what end ſhould he threaten it, ſince unleſs we believe it, it can no more affect us than the firing of a *Gun* that is charged with nothing but Powder, and was deſigned to make a noiſe only, but to do no Execution? So that if it be *repugnant* to God's *Goodneſs* to execute this Penalty, it muſt be *repugnant* to his *Wiſdom* to denounce it; but it being not only *conſiſtent* with, but an Expreſſion of his *Goodneſs* to denounce it, when he deſigns thereby to oblige us more firmly to our Duty, in which our *everlaſting* Happineſs is included, it may be no *leſs* an Expreſſion of the ſame *Goodneſs* to execute it upon us, when we by our *obſtinate* Perſiſtence in Sin have render'd our ſelves *incapable* of Mercy. For now there being no more *good* to to be done upon us, it will be an Act of *Goodneſs* in *God* to puniſh us *for ever*, if thereby any *good* may be done to

others

others by us; if by making us *everlaſting* Monuments of his *juſt* Indignation, he can everlaſtingly warn and ſecure *others* from thoſe *deſperate* Courſes that ruined us. For in this Caſe his puniſhing us *for ever*, may be an *effectual* means to do that *good* to others which he intended to do to us by threatning to puniſh us *for ever*, and they may take warning by our Puniſhment, though we would take none by his Threatning. And when by being obſtinately *deaf* to the Threat of *eternal* Perdition, which *God* denounced on purpoſe to oblige us to be *happy*, we have not only forfeited our ſelves to it, but have alſo *ſinned* our ſelves into an Incapacity of having any *good* done upon us; the only Uſe which the *Divine Goodneſs* can make of us for the *future*, is to do *good* to others by us; which it can no otherwiſe do, but by making our *everlaſting* Suffering an *everlaſting* Example for them to take warning by. For though there is no doubt but every *vertuous* Soul ſhall be hereafter ſo confirmed in its ſtate of Beatitude, as that it ſhall never fall from it, yet ſhall it be confirmed no otherwiſe than by the force of thoſe Reaſons and *invincible* Motives which ſhall then continually urge, and immovably determine it unto that which is good: One of which Reaſons, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, will

will be their Proſpect of the *endleſs* Miſeries of the *Damned*, which will be an *everlaſting* Monitor to them, and together with their *own* ſenſe of the *raviſhing* Pleaſures of *Goodneſs*, will ſecure them *for ever* from falling. For if the *Angels* of *Heaven* took warning by the Fall and Ruin of their *Apoſtate Brethren*, as doubtleſs they did, and thereupon became more immovably confirmed in *Innocence* and *Goodneſs*; why may we not as well ſuppoſe, that one of thoſe Reaſons by which the *Spirits of juſt Men* are ſo immovably confirmed in their *Heavenly State*, is the *ſad* Example of the *endleſs* Miſeries of the Wicked? If therefore when *God* hath denounced *eternal* Miſery againſt us on purpoſe to threaten us into Happineſs, we will take no warning, it is an Act of *Goodneſs* in him to inflict it upon us, ſince thereby he may ſo effectually contribute to the confirming of *others* in *eternal* Happineſs. For if we will not be wrought on by ſuch a *dreadful* Denunciation, there is no good can be done upon us; and when we are paſt Recovery, and are forfeited by *our own* Obſtinacy into the hands of God's Vengeance, it will be an Act of Goodneſs in him ſo to diſpoſe of us as may be moſt for the *good* of others, and conſequently to diſpoſe of us to *eternal* Miſery, and by ſo doing to make

uſe of us as Arguments to confirm and eſtabliſh *others* in *eternal* Happineſs; that ſo our Sufferings may be to them what his Threatnings were to us, Arguments to oblige us to be *happy for ever*. And ſo I have done with the *Firſt* Thing propos'd, which was to ſhew you that if *God* be ſo determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Juſtice* or *Goodneſs*, retain *loſt* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and abſolutely refuſe to accept any Ranſom for them.

I now proceed to the *Second* Head of Diſcourſe, namely, to prove that *God* is actually determined ſo to do. And this I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate by theſe *three* Reaſons.

1. Becauſe he hath already exacted a Ranſom for the Souls of Men, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reaſonably infer, that if *this* be rejected he will accept no *other*.

2. Becauſe he hath expreſly declared *himſelf* to be thus determined.

3. Becauſe having thus declared himſelf, we muſt ſuppoſe that either he intended this Declaration only for a *Scare-crow*, or that he is determined to act accordingly.

1*ſt*. That *God* is determined to conclude loſt Souls under *endleſs* Miſery, and admit no

no Ranſom for them, appears from hence; becauſe he hath already exacted a Ranſom for them, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reaſonably infer, that if *this* be rejected, he will accept no *other*. When by our *firſt* Apoſtacy from *God*, we ſtained the Innocence of our Natures, and forfeited our Lives to the *juſt* Vengeance of *Heaven*; ſo terribly was it then incenſed againſt us, that it would accept no *meaner* Ranſom for us than the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God*; for ſo St. *Peter* tells us, *That we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot*, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. And though this Ranſom was of ſuch a *vaſt* and *incomparable* Value, that all the Treaſures in *Heaven* and Earth are *inſignificant* Trifles to it; yet was the Virtue of it to extend no further than to thoſe, who, by a *lively* Faith, and *unfeigned* Repentance, returned from their Rebellion to their Duty and Allegiance; which if we do not, but inſtead thereof obſtinately perſiſt in our Wickedneſs and Folly, we renounce all our Part and Intereſt in the Blood of our *Saviour*; and do in effect declare, that upon ſuch Terms as thoſe we will not be beholding to him for our Ranſom; but that rather than

accept of Redemption upon ſuch *angrateful* Conditions, we will truſt to the Courteſy of the Vengeance of *God*, and abide the moſt *fatal* Effects of it. When therefore by perſiſting to the End in our Unbelief and Impenitence, we have finally rejected the Blood of *Chriſt*, and utterly extinguiſh'd all our Right and Title to it; what Pretence of Reaſon have we to hope, that *God* will ever accept of any *other* Ranſom for us? When to the Sins, by which we made the *firſt* Forfeiture of our Souls, we have added the *rank* and *horrid* Impiety of trampling on the Blood of the Son of *God*, and ſo are not only not redeemed by it from the Vengeance to come, but are a *thouſand* times more deeply inthralled to it by reaſon of that *additional* Guilt we have contracted by ſquandring away the Price of our Redemption: With what Face can we expect, in the midſt of ſuch *black* Circumſtances, that *God* ſhould accept of any Exchange for our Souls? He that would not releaſe us from the Obligation of our *firſt* Guilts upon any *leſs* Conſideration than the Blood of his Son, what *likelihood* is there that any Conſideration ſhould move him to releaſe us after we have ſo prodigiouſly augmented our Guilt by rejecting his Blood, and finally renouncing all our Intereſt in it? Doubtleſs he that demanded

manded ſo *vaſt* a Ranſom for us when our Guilt was ſo comparatively *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, will account no Ranſom *ſufficient* when we have ſo tranſcendently inhanced and multiplied it. For if the Blood of *Chriſt*, which is of ſuch an *unſpeakable* value can give us no Relief without our *willing* Acceptance of it upon the Terms it is propoſed to us, then when we have finally refuſed it on thoſe Terms, it muſt be ſomething that is more *valuable* than his Blood that muſt relieve us; ſomething that is *ſufficient* not only to redeem us from thoſe Guilts which his Blood was a Ranſom for, but alſo to expiate the Guilt of our trampling on his Blood, which is the *greateſt* and *blackeſt* of all. But ſince the Blood of *Chriſt* is incomparably the moſt *precious* Ranſom that *Heaven* and Earth could afford, what hope is there that when *this* is rejected by us, *God* ſhould accept any *other* in exchange for our Souls?

2*dly*. That *God* is really determined to conclude *loſt* Souls under *endleſs* Miſery, and admit no Ranſom for them, appears alſo from hence, Becauſe he hath expreſly declared himſelf to be ſo determined. For ſo our *bleſſed Saviour*, who was the *great* Meſſenger of his Will to the World, hath expreſly told us, that the *final* Sentence of the

Wicked ſhall be to *everlaſting Fire*, *Matth* 25.41. and that the Fate of *obſtinate* Sinners, whom he compares to Chaff, ſhall be to be *burned up with unquenchable fire*. But perhaps you may object, that theſe Texts only prove the *Everlaſtingneſs* of the Fire in which they ſhall ſuffer, and not their *everlaſting* Suffering in it; for this Fire perhaps may immediately conſume, and utterly deſtroy them, and render them *inſenſible* of Miſery *for ever*. To which I anſwer, That the contrary is moſt evident; for they are expreſly ſaid to live in this Fire, and to perform the Functions of *living* Beings in Miſery; *to weep and wail, and gnaſh their teeth*, *Matth.* 13. 42. and in the Parable of *Dives*, he is ſaid to *lift up his eyes in Hell, being in torments*, and to *ſee Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom*; and to *cry out to Abraham, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*, Luke 16. 23. ------A *plain* Evidence that this Fire is to torment and not to conſume them. Well, but this you will ſay imports no more than their being tortured in *Hell* for ſome period of Time, after which, it may be, they may ceaſe to be, and conſequently to be *miſerable*. To which I anſwer, That elſewhere it is expreſly

aſſerted,

aſſerted, that this Torture is to indure *for ever*; for *theſe*, ſaith our *Saviour*, ſpeaking of the Wicked, *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*, *Matth.* 25. 46. And how can their Puniſhment be *everlaſting*, unleſs we ſuppoſe them to ſubſiſt everlaſtingly in it? If you ſay it is *everlaſting* only as it is an *everlaſting* Deſtruction, or Privation of their Being: I anſwer, That in other Places of *Scripture* it is expreſly aſſerted, that this *everlaſting* Puniſhment is a *poſitive* thing; for it is ſaid to be a *Worm* that never *dieth*, *Mark* 9. 44. that is, that to all *Eternity* lives and preys upon the *wretched* Sufferers; and more expreſly yet, *Revel.* 20. 10. thoſe that are *caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone*, are ſaid to *be tormented* there *day and night for ever and ever*: Where the *Greek* word βασανισθήσονται doth plainly denote *poſitive* Torment, and referring peculiarly to a Rack, denotes the kind of this *poſitive* Torment to be ſuch as is not deſigned to put an end to our Lives, but to continue them with *inexpreſſible* Pains. For this we know is the *proper* Uſe and Deſign of a Rack; and accordingly upon this *tormenting* Rack of *Helliſh* Puniſhment they are ſaid to have *no reſt day nor night*, *Rev.* 14. 11. So that the *eternal* Miſery of *loſt* Souls is as fully and expreſly aſſerted in *Scripture*, as it could well

have been, had it been expreſſed with a Deſign to leave no Pretence of Exception for Gainſayers; and when a thing is as plainly aſſerted to *be* as it could well have been if it really were, either we muſt ſuppoſe the Thing to *be*, or elſe the Aſſertion to be *fallacious*. So that if we think that God's *own* Word doth truly ſignify his Determination, we muſt from hence be forced to conclude, that he is really determined to ſhut up *loſt* Souls in *eternal* Miſery, and admit no Ranſom for them.

3*dly*. And laſtly, This alſo appears, becauſe if after he hath thus declared himſelf, there were any Reaſon to think that he is not determined to act accordingly, that Reaſon would warrant us to believe that this Declaration was only intended for a *Scare-crow*, and conſequently to contemn and deſpiſe it. For againſt all that hath been ſaid, it may be (and is by ſome Men) objected, That *God* is not bound to do as he threatens; that when by our Diſobedience we have incurred the Penalty he threatens, he hath an *undoubted* Right indeed to inflict it upon us, and conſequently may, if he pleaſe, inflict it without any Wrong or Injuſtice; but then, if he pleaſe, he may diſpenſe with it *too* either in the *whole*, or in part, as he ſees convenient. For the Puniſhment being only a Debt

Debt which the Sinner owes to him, he is no more obliged than *other* Creditors are to exact the *utmoſt* farthing of it; but may exact or remit the *whole*, or abate what part ſoever he pleaſes; and therefore it is to be hoped, that he being a *merciful* Creditor will not be ſo *extreme* and *rigorous* as to exact of us the *utmoſt* Puniſhment we owe him; but that when he hath made us *ſmart* a while for our Folly, he will either releaſe us into a more *happy* Condition, or put an end to our Beings and Miſeries together. To which I might anſwer, That when by our Sins we have forfeited our ſelves to the *juſt* Vengeance of *God*, it is *infinite* Mercy and Goodneſs to others, to puniſh us according to his Threatning; and therefore when we by our Sins have render'd our ſelves *incapable* of his Mercy, that Mercy which now inclines him to do *good* to *us*, will then equally incline him to *good* to *others*, by the *dreadful* Example of our Puniſhment; and ſo he may be a very *mereiful* Creditor, and notwithſtanding exact of us the *utmoſt* Farthing. But this I have already largely inſiſted on, and therefore, 2*dly*. I anſwer, That what God may do is not for us to determine when he may, or may not, and is obliged to neither; but when he hath expreſly denounced what he will do, we can have no Reaſon to hope that

that he will be *better* than his Word. For if after that he hath denounced, that if we perſiſt in our Sin he will puniſh us *for ever* for it, he ſhould have left us any *juſt* Reaſon to hope that he will not, he would thereby have countermined himſelf, and baffled the Deſign of his *own* Denunciation, which is to terrify his *rebellious* Creatures from their Sins, and to aw them into Obedience to his Laws. But how much Reaſon ſoever he hath given me to hope, that he will not be ſo *ſevere* to me as he threatens, ſo much Reaſon he muſt have given me not to be afraid of his Threatnings. If I had any *juſt* Reaſon to believe that he will be more *merciful* than to inflict what he denounces, it is an *irrational* thing for me to dread his Denunciations; for I know *God* will do as *juſt* Reaſon directs, and therefore I muſt conclude either my Reaſon to be *falſe*, or God's Denunciation to be a *Scare-crow*; for if there be any *juſt* Reaſon why his Mercy and Goodneſs ſhould interpoſe, and avert the Execution of his Threats from me, I ought not to be afraid of them, becauſe I am ſure he can do nothing that his Mercy and Goodneſs forbids: But if there be no Reaſon for ſuch an Interpoſure, I am unreaſonably *preſumptuous* to expect it. So that either my Expectation muſt be *groundleſs*,

or

or my Fear of God's Threatnings *irrational*: And can it be imagined that the *wiſe* God would ever go about to aw his Creatures into Obedience by threatning their Sin with ſuch Puniſhments as he knows they have *juſt* Reaſon not to be afraid of? Whatſoever therefore *God* may do, I am ſure if we go on in our Sins, we can have no Reaſon to hope that he will either not puniſh us at all, or *leſs* than he hath threatned; or conſequently, that he will abate us *one* moment of that *eternal* Miſery which he hath ſo plainly and expreſly denounced againſt us. What then remains, but that ſince when our Soul is *loſt*, it is *loſt for ever*, we now take all *poſſible* care to ſecure it while we may.

V. I proceed now to the *Fifth* and *laſt* Propoſition; *That this irrecoverable Loſs of the Soul is of ſuch VAST and UNSPEAKABLE moment, that the Gain of all the World is not ſufficient to compenſate it: What ſhall it profit a Man if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* That is, It will not profit him at all; nay it will be ſo far from *that*, that it will turn to his *unſpeakable* Loſs and Diſadvantage: Though by renouncing his Profeſſion of my Doctrine, or his Obedience of my Laws, a Man were ſure to make

make himſelf Lord of all the World, and to poſſeſs and injoy it as long as he lived; yet if for ſo doing he ſhould afterwards loſe his Soul, as moſt certainly he will, he will find in the iſſue that he hath made a *woful* Bargain of it, and be forced to acknowledge himſelf a *vaſt* Loſer when he comes to ſuffer thoſe *intollerable* Damages which the Loſs of a Soul implies. For the Proof of which, I ſhall run a Compariſon between the *Gain* and the *Loſs*, and therein endeavour to repreſent to you how much the Evil of *this* Loſs exceeds the Good of *that* Gain; and this I ſhall do in theſe *following* Particulars:

1*ſt*. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantaſtical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *real* and *ſubſtantial*.

2*dly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *narrow* and *particular*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *large* and *univerſal*.

3*dly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is never to be improved into *Good*.

4*thly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *mixt* and *ſophiſticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *pure* and *unmingled*.

5*thly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *full* of Intermiſſions; but the Evil that is in the Loſs is *continual*.

6*thly*.

6thly. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *ſhort* and *tranſitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *eternal.*

1ſt. The Good that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantaſtical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs is *real* and *ſubſtantial.* For whatſoever we gain of this World's *Goods* beyond what is *neceſſary* to ſerve the *real* Occaſions, and *modeſt* Conveniencies of this *preſent* Life, adminiſters to no *other* purpoſe but only to gratify an *extravagant* Fancy: For all the *real* Need that a Man hath of theſe *worldly Goods*, is only to maintain and provide for his Body; for his Soul hath no more need of them, than an Angel hath of Money to buy Victuals and Clothes with: and one would think ſo *ſmall* a thing as an *humane* Body is, could not need *many* things; and that a piece of *animate* Matter, ſome ſix foot long, might be very *eaſily* and *cheaply* provided for: And indeed ſo it would be if we could once forbear fancying its Needs to be *greater* than they are; but if we let looſe the Reins to an *ungoverned* Fancy, That will ſo extend its Needs beyond the Capacities of its Nature, that all the World will be *too* little to content the *extravagant* Appetites of this *little* Clod of Earth. Lay but your Fancies aſide, and you will want no *other* Apparel but what is *ſufficient* to keep

keep you *warm*, and *clean*, and *modeſt*, and with this you may be very cheaply provided; but if you will reſolve to humour that *capricious* thing, you will want the Revenue of a *Lordſhip* to cover your Nakedneſs. Keep but your Fancies in order, and your Appetites will be contented with *plain* and *wholeſom* Proviſions, and this a *ſmall* Income will furniſh you with; but if once you let looſe that *roving* Faculty, and ſuffer it to grow *wanton* and *delicate*, that will ſo ſtretch your Appetites, that the ſtores of all the *four Elements* will ſcarce be *ſufficient* to gratify their Luxuries. And ſo it is in all *other* things appertaining to the Body; whoſe Wants according to Natures Meaſures are *ſmall*, but according to Fancies are *infinite*. So that if a Man had all the World in his Poſſeſſion, yet all but that *little little* part of it that is either naturally *neceſſary*, or rationally *convenient* for his *bodily* Subſiſtence, would be *good* for nothing but to humour the Deſires of an *extravagant* Fancy; which are ſo far from being quenched, that they are but the more inflamed by Injoyment. If I had all the Wealth of *Cræſus*, the *good* Fortunes of *Cæſar*, and the Dominions of *Alexander*, what would it advantage me? I ſhould only have abundance of things that I have no

real

real need of; things, that if I would my ſelf, I might eaſily be as *happy* without, as I can be with them. For would I but make my Nature and my Reaſon the meaſure of my Wants, I might always live next door to Satisfaction; and as for my Wants, they would be ſo *light* and *portable*, that I might eaſily take them, and carry them along with me, and lay them down almoſt whereſoever I pleaſed. Whereas if I permit my Fancy to grow *wild* and *imaginative*, I ſhall always find my Wants doubled with my Injoyments; and whereas when I had but *five Pounds*, I needed but *five hundred*; when I have *five hundred*, I ſhall need *five thouſand*; and ſo on till at laſt I need beyond all Poſſibility of Satisfaction. Since therefore all that this World can do for me, beſides the ſupplying of a *few modeſt* Needs, which a very *little* of it will do, what a *miſerable* Loſer ſhall I be, if merely to gratify my Fancy, I forfeit my Soul, and incur the *real* Miſeries of a *woful* Eternity in Purſuit of the *fantaſtick* Joys of a moment? If to purchaſe things which I ſhall never be the better for, which while I have not I do not need, and which when I have I ſhall not injoy; I ſhould not only ſquander away the moſt *ſubſtantial* Happineſs, but plung my ſelf into a *vaſt* Abyſs

of

of *real* and *intolerable* Miſeries: O *good God*, what a *woful* Bargain ſhall I have of it? For though the Pleaſure of our Sin doth always vaniſh on the Brink of Fruition, and like a *golden* Dream, concludes in a *diſappointed* Expectation; yet the Sting that is to follow it will produce in us not only a *real*, but an extreamly *ſharp* and *dolorous* Perception; ſo extreamly *ſharp*, that it will pierce our very Hearts, and cauſe us to roar out with Anguiſh for ever. And alas! what a *poor* Compenſation is it for a Man that muſt e're long be enduring the Tortures of a *tedious* Famine, to be entertained a *few* Moments with the Picture of a Feaſt, or the Story of *Cleopatra*'s Banquet? Or what Man in his Wits would ever forfeit himſelf, for the *mere* Fancy of a Pleaſure, to the *lingering* Torments of a Rack? And yet, O *wretched* Sinner, thou acteſt a *thouſand* times more extravagantly; who, by thy *unlawful* Purſuits of the *imaginary* Pleaſures of this World, betrayeſt thy Soul to the *bitter* Torments of *Hell*.

2*dly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *narrow* and *particular*, but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *large* and *univerſal*. 'Tis but a Part of our ſelves, and that the *worſt* Part *too*, that this World's *Goods* can benefit and advantage; they can only

only clothe our Bodies more ſplendidly, and feed them more deliciouſly, and furniſh them with more Plenty of *outward* Accomdations; but alas for the Soul, they are as *inſignificant* to her, as *Muſical* Sounds are to the Eye of the Body, or *magnificent* Shews to the Ear: They cannot improve the *meaneſt* Faculty about her, nor make her in any reſpect either the *better* or the *wiſer*. And as for the Body it ſelf, wherein all their Lines do center, there are a *thouſand* Caſes in which they are perfectly *uſeleſs*; for they cannot give *Health* to it in any *Sickneſs*, nor *Eaſe* in any *Pain*; they cannot recover a *loſt* Senſe, nor reſtore a *withered* Limb, nor rectify a *deformed* Feature; nor is it in their Power to reprieve it from the Grave one moment beyond the *natural* Period of its Mortality. So extreamly *narrow* are theſe *worldly* Goods which we are ſo greedy of, that they can extend their Benefits no farther than the Body; nay, and even to *that* they are vaſtly *inadequate*, there being a thouſand *bodily* Neceſſities whereunto they cannot extend themſelves. So that if to purchaſe theſe we expoſe our ſelves to *eternal* Perdition, we ſhall have in compariſon but a *drop* of *Good* to compenſate our ſelves for an *Ocean* of *Miſery*. For the Miſery of *Hell* is as *vaſt* and *extenſive* as our

Capacity of Suffering, and hath in it an *appropriate* Torment for every *ſenſible* Part of our Natures. It racks the *wretched* Soul in every Faculty, and fills *up* all its Capacities of Miſery with Anguiſh and Vexation: It afflicts its Mind with *horrid* Apprehenſions, wounds and gaſhes its Conſcience with *diſmal* Reflections; it feſters its Will with *black* and *venomous* Paſſions, and ſtarves its Deſires with *everlaſting* Famine. And as it leaves no part of the Soul untormented, but covers it over from Head to Foot with Wounds, and Bruiſes, and *putrifying* Sores; ſo when the Body at the Reſurrection is reunited to it, the Miſery of Hell will extend to this alſo; for then it will have ſuperadded to its *Spiritual* Plagues the moſt *exquiſite* Inſtrument of *Corporeal* Torment, *viz.* the *dark*, and *noiſom*, and *ſcorching* Flames of a *burning* World, which will ſeize upon the Bodies of *Reprobate Sinners*, they being finally abandoned to them by the *laſt* and *final* Sentence, and ſtick cloſe to, and burn through them *for ever*. And their Bodies being thus wrapped and clothed in *flaming* Sulphur, muſt needs be exquiſitely vexed in every Part and Member, and feel as many Torments as they have Senſes to indure them. Thus the Miſeries of *Hell*, you ſee, are far more *extenſive* than the *Goods* of this World;

World; for whereas *theſe* extend only to our Bodies, and can relieve them but in a *few* of their Neceſſities, *thoſe* over-ſpread both the Body and Soul, and are both *co-eternal* and *co-equal* with their *utmoſt* Capacities of Suffering: So that when by our *unlawful* Purſuits of the *Goods* of this World we forfeit our ſelves to *eternal* Perdition, we plunge our *whole* Nature into *intollerable* Miſery for the Eaſe and the Pleaſure of one *particular* Part. Now would any Man in his Wits, do you think, eat *Rats-bane* for no *other* Reaſon, but only becauſe it is *ſweet?* Would he to pleaſe his *liquoriſh* Palate diffuſe a *tormenting* Poiſon over all his Parts and Members? Or would he think the Pleaſure of one *ſweet* Guſt a *ſufficient* Compenſation for all the *ſucceeding* Spaſms and Convulſions? Surely no; none but a Mad-man could ever admit of ſuch an Extravagance. And yet, *O wretched* Sinner! thou art far more *wild* and *extravagant*; for *for* a *particular Good* thou throweſt thy ſelf headlong into an *univerſal* Miſery; and to gratify thy Body in a *few little* things, doſt utterly ruin both thy Body and Soul. To pleaſe thy ſelf in *one* part, thou puniſheſt thy ſelf in *all*; and for the gratifying *one* Senſe, deriveſt a *tormenting* Venom over all the Senſes of thy Nature; and ſo *in fine*,

wilt have nothing but the Pleaſure of a Taſte or a Touch to compenſate thee for all the Agonies and Torments that thy Body and Soul together are *able* to ſuſtain. And what a *poor* Compenſation this is, I leave you to judg.

3*dly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is never to be improved into *Good*. When we are arrived to the Poſſeſſion of thoſe *outward* Goods which at preſent we do ſo greedily gaſp after, it is a very *uncertain* thing whether they will prove Goods to us or no; whether, even as to this Life, we ſhall be the *better*, or the *worſe* for them. For it is very often ſeen that theſe *worldly* Goods prove the *worſt* of Plagues to thoſe that are the Owners of them, and that thoſe things which we account the Bleſſings of this Life, do prove the Curſes and Miſeries of it. When by a *thouſand Lies*, *Flatteries*, and *Circumventions*, a Man hath raiſed himſelf *up* to that Pinacle of Preferment which his Ambition aſpired to, how often hath that Height proved the Occaſion of his Fall, by expoſing him to thoſe Storms of Envy and Misfortune which would have blown over his Head, had he ſat quietly *below*, and been contented to injoy himſelf in a more *private* For-

Fortune? And ſo when by an *infinite* number of *Rapines*, and *Oppreſſions*, *Frauds*, and *diſhoneſt Compliances*, a Man hath amaſſed together a *vaſt* deal of Wealth, how often hath *that* proved the Occaſion of his Undoing? Sometimes by expoſing him to the *rapacious* Covetouſneſs of *others*, but moſt commonly to the *ill* Effects of his own *extravagant* Luxuries. For uſually when Fraud is the *Procurer* of Wealth, Wealth is the *Baud* of Luxury; this being the *beſt* Expedient to drown the Cry of the Guilt of our Diſhoneſty. And then by that time Luxury hath produced its *natural* Effects, it commonly leaves the *wealthy* Poſſeſſor in a far *worſe* Condition than Poverty; it leaves him ſo rackt with the *Gout* or the *Stone*, ſo over-whelmed with *Catarrhs* or *Dropſies*, that the *miſerable* Man would be heartily contented to part with all his Wealth for Eaſe, and to return to Poverty ſo he might but return to the Health of an *honeſt* Plough-man; whereas would he have contented himſelf with the *honeſt* Acqueſt of a *moderate* Fortune, he need have wanted nothing but Temptations to Luxury, and Proviſions for *tormenting* Diſeaſes. So that in ſhort, whilſt we are purſuing this World's Goods, we know not what our Game will be till we have ſeiſed on it; peradventure

inſtead of *Venizon* we are hunting a Serpent, which, when we have caught, will ſting and invenom us, and prove a Plague inſtead of a Satisfaction. And is it not *extravagant* Madneſs then for Men to run themſelves into all thoſe Miſeries, which *everlaſting* Ruin and Perdition implies, for the ſake of ſuch *uncertain* Goods, which when they are poſſeſſed of, for all they know, may do them a thouſand times more Miſchief than Good? For as for thoſe *future* Miſeries, which by our *ſinful* Purſuits of theſe *preſent* Goods we incur, they are all ſuch *abſolute* and *eſſential* Evils, that there is not one drop of Good to be extracted out of them; for as they are *eternal* they are of an *unalterable* Nature, and the ſame *inſupportable* Plagues they were yeſterday, they will continue to be to day, and *for ever*. Indeed if we were to out-live them, they might be accidentally *advantagious* to us; they might diſcipline our Natures for an Happineſs to come, and ſerve as ſo many Toils to our *future* Pleaſures; and when they are paſt, the Remembrance of them, like *bitter* Sauce, might give a Reliſh to our Joys, and render them more *grateful* and *delicious*: But we being to indure 'em for ever, there is nothing Good can ſucceed them, no *poſſible* Advantage can be derived from them;

them; for in Miſeries that have no End, there can be nothing but Miſery. And is it not very ſtrange then, that Men ſhould forfeit their Souls to ſuch *unalterable* Miſeries, for ſuch Goods as may be Plagues to them? when for all they know there may be ſuch a Train of Miſchiefs at the heels of theſe *Pleaſures*, and *Profits*, and *Honours* they are ſo greedy of, as may out-weigh all the good of them, and rendet them a *dear* Penny-worth, though they had never pawned their Souls for them. And if it ſo prove, as it is very *probable* it may, then their Bargain is *worſe* than if they had pawned their Souls for nothing; becauſe they have incurred *one* Miſery only to ſeiſe upon *another*, and have waded through a *temporal* to come at an *eternal* one.

4*thly*. The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World, is *mixed* and *ſophiſticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *pure* and *unmingled*. Should a Man ſell his Soul for never ſo *great* a ſhare of this World's Goods, he would find he had gotten but a very *uneaſy* Purchaſe; a Purchaſe as he can neither ſecure without a *great* deal of Care, nor yet injoy without a great deal of Diſſatisfaction. For what we call ours, is really ours but for our Portion of Expence and Uſe; and all that is ours beyond this, is only the Title

and the Care, and the Trouble of ſecuring and diſpenſing it; for let but your Servants walk into your *Gardens of Pleaſure*, and the Air ſhall fan them with as *gentle* Gales, the Flowers delight them with as *fragrant* Odours, and the Birds entertain them with as *raviſhing* Melodies. And in ſome ſenſe your *meaneſt* Servants injoy what you have with *far* more freedom than you; for your Poſſeſſions are like a *great* Harveſt, which many Labourers muſt bring in, and more muſt eat of; only you are the Center of all the Cares, and you they fix on; but the Profits run out to all the Lines of your Circle, who uſually injoy their *ſeveral* ſhares with much more Peace and Quiet than you. You take the Pains to dig the Well, and undergo the Care of ſupplying and maintaining it; and when you have done, you can drink no more of it than the *meaneſt* Slave about you; but what you drink can't be ſo *ſweet* and *pure*, becauſe it is daſhed with many more Cares and Diſturbances. For conſidering the *infinite* Hazards theſe *worldly* Goods are expoſed to, they muſt needs carry with them abundance of Cares and Diſquietudes; ſo that when you are poſſeſſed of them, you only graſp a Bundle of *gilded* Thorns, which while they *pleaſe* your Eyes, will *prick* your Hearts, and continually diſeaſe

diſeaſe you in the Injoyment of them. And then for the Injoyment it ſelf, conſidered abſtractedly from thoſe Cares that ſurround it, alas it is ſuch as rather creates Deſire than Satisfaction; for though at a diſtance theſe *Terreſtrial* Goods do promiſe us *fair*; and raiſe in us *vaſt* and *boundleſs* Hopes; yet ſtill when we approach nearer to them, we find our ſelves miſerably deceived. And then our Injoyment falling ſo vaſtly *ſhort* of our Expectation, all thoſe *ſwelling* Hopes that flattered and tolled us on, fall flat immediately under the Diſappointments of Fruition; and accordingly our Deſires miſſing their *promiſed* Satisfactions, grow more *outragious* and *violent*. And thus our Injoyments, as they are compaſſed with Vexations, ſo are they mingled with *reſtleſs* Diſcontents, as being all *too little* for our *vaſt* Deſires; which are therefore rather inraged than ſatisfied with them. What *infinite* Loſers therefore muſt thoſe Men be, who to compaſs thoſe *ſophiſticated* Goods which have ſo many Evils intermixed with them, forfeit their Souls to *everlaſting* Perdition? which is ſo *vaſt* and ſo *intenſe* an *Evil*, as will admit no degree of *Good* to be intermingled with it; a Miſery ſo *pure* and *unallayed*, as that it totally excludes all Communication with Happineſs, and will not admit

admit the *leaſt* Hope of Eaſe or Refreſhment. For what Eaſe can we hope for in the *everlaſting* Burnings? What Refreſhment can we expect in the *unquenchable* Lake of Fire and Brimſtone? Doubtleſs we may as ſoon hope to find a Cordial in the Sting of a Scorpion, or *ſprightly Nectar* in a Neſt of Waſps, as one degree of Eaſe or Comfort in *Hell*. There is not a Gleam of *Light* in all that Region of *Darkneſs*, not a Drop of *Sweet* in all that *vaſt* Ocean of *Gall* and *Wormwood*; but it is all Miſery, *ſharp* and *exquiſite* Miſery, without the *leaſt* Mixture of Eaſe, or Hope of Mitigation. Can we then be ſo *ſtupid* as to imagine the injoying this World's *Goods*, which are all ſuch Compoſitions of *Good* and *Evil*, worth the enduring ſuch *pure* and *abſtracted* Miſeries for ever? Would you for the Pleaſure of an *intemperate* Draught that will quickly end in a Qualm or an Headach, be contented to indure the Torment of being *impaled?* Or provided you might ſpend this Night in your *laſcivious* Injoyment, which after a *few* Moments will conclude in Shame and Remorſe, would you be willing to roar upon the Rack all the Night after? doubtleſs you would not. And yet, God knows, theſe *Pleaſures* are not comparably ſo *diſproportionate* to thoſe *Pains*, as the Pleaſures

ſures of this World are to the Pains of *Eter-ternity.* How then is it *poſſible* that ſuch *Bitter-ſweets* as theſe are, *Sweets* that are chequered with ſo many Cares, and allayed with ſo many Diſcontents, and Diſappoint-ments, ſhould be *ſufficient* to countervail thoſe *intollerable* Miſeries which the Loſs of our Souls implies?

5*thly.* The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *full* of Intermiſſions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *continual.* If I were Lord of all the World, I ſhould never be able to live in a *conſtant* Injoyment of it. For ſuch *wretched* Counterfeits are all the Plea-ſures of Senſe, that they will not indure the Teſt of a *long* Fruition; for at the beſt they are but Frolicks of Delight that never *ſeize* us but when we are turned *up* to them in *Moods* and *Fits,* and all the Complacencies we have in them are nothing but the *little* Starts of our Appetite, which, as ſoon as it hath done craving, grows *aweary* of them, and ſo injoys and loaths them by Turns; for they can dwell no longer upon the Ap-tite than while the Neceſſities of Nature do continue; and every *freſh* Morſel after the Hunger is ſatisfied, is but a *new* Labour to a *tired* Digeſtion, and ſo inſtead of being a Pleaſure becomes an Oppreſſion. So that it is but a very *little* while that the Pleaſure of

of any *outward* Injoyment continues; for till it hath pleaſed us it is not a Pleaſure, and when it hath, it ceaſes to be ſo; and ſo it dies as ſoon as it is born, and its Nativity is only a *Prelude* to its Funeral. Thus all our Injoyments are ſtinted by our Appetites, which are naturally *incapable* of a *continued* Fruition. But then beſides this, our Injoyments are *liable* to a thouſand *other* Interruptions, which are not in our power to prevent or avoid; for whether we will or no, we muſt be ſome times out of Humour, and then all the Pleaſures in the World are moſt *tedious* Impertinencies; and ſome times we muſt *ſleep*, and then we are *inſenſible* of them; and ſometimes be *ſick*, and then they are as *taſtleſs* as a Cork; and ſome times be *griped* with *guilty* Thoughts, and *ill-aboding* Reflections, and then, inſtead of Pleaſures, they are our Horrors and Vexations. Thus our Injoyment, like an Ague, is *full* of Intermiſſions; now we are *pleaſed*, and anon we are *diſpleaſed*, and immediately after the *hot Fit* is over, the *cold One* returns; and thus it would be if we had all the World in our Poſſeſſion. And indeed the Intervals of our Injoyment of theſe *Terreſtrial* Goods are uſually *longer* than the Injoyment it ſelf, and the *hot Fits* of our Pleaſure and Fruition are generally ſooner over,

than

than thoſe *cold Ones* of Diſpleaſure and Diſſatisfaction that ſucceed them. So that if I could command all the *Goods* in the World, they would be ſo far from yielding me a *continued* Happineſs, that in all Probability the Interruptions of my Happineſs would take up a *greater* Part of my Life than the Injoyment of it; and perhaps for every *one* moment of Fruition, I ſhould ſpend *two* either in Pain, or in Non-perception of Pleaſure. How then is it *poſſible* that ſuch a *broken* and *diſcontinued* Happineſs as this ſhould ever make us amends for thoſe Miſeries that are included in the Loſs of our Souls? For to loſe our Souls is to be *miſerable* without any Interruption, to be eternally grieved and tortured without any Intervals of Eaſe or Refreſhment. For the State of Perdition is a *continued* Torment ſpun out into an *endleſs* Duration, wherein there are no *Days* of *Reſt*, nor *Nights* of *Sleep*, nor *intermediate* Pauſes of Eaſe; where the Fire never ceaſes burning, nor the Worm gnawing, but *Wo* ſucceeds *Wo* without Intermiſſion, and Miſeries, like the *nimble* Minutes of Time, follow Miſeries, and tread cloſe upon *one anothers* Heels. Hence, *Rev.* 20. 10. thoſe that are caſt into this Lake of Perdition, are ſaid to be *tormented day and night for ever*; which plainly implies that their Miſeries are all but one

one *uninterrupted* Torment, or *continued* Succeſſion of *dolorous* Perceptions *for ever*. And if ſo, *O bleſſed God*, what a *poor* Compenſation for it are the *broken* Joys of this World? For if the Miſery of *Hell* were to laſt no longer than the Happineſs of this World, yet if for *one* Week's Happineſs here I were to indure *another* Week's Miſery *there*, I ſhould have a *miſerable* Bargain of it; becauſe the Happineſs being ſo *interrupted*, and the Miſery ſo *continued*, I muſt in the ſame ſpace undergo at leaſt *double* the Miſery that I injoyed Happineſs. And what Man would be contented to live all the *next* Week in a Cauldron of *boyling* Oyl, wherein he knows he ſhall be continually *tormented*, provided he may ſpend *this* Week in an *uninterrupted* Injoyment of the moſt *grateful* Luxuries, which he knows he muſt be as often and as long *inſenſible* as he can be *ſenſible* of?

6thly. And laſtly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *fading* and *tranſitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of the Soul is *eternal*. For ſo *impotent* are all this World's *Goods*, that they cannot inſure us of *one* moment's Injoyment of them. It may be as ſoon as ever we have filled our Bags and Barns with the Wages of our Iniquity, and have a *plentiful* Proviſion for many Years Eaſe and Luxury, we may be ſnatched away

way upon the very Brinks of Injoyment, and hurried into a *woful* Eternity, there to conſume thoſe Years in Miſery and Torment, which we promiſed to ſpend in Pleaſure and Voluptuouſneſs. This you know was the Caſe of the *rich Epicure* in the *Goſpel*; how did the *jolly* Wretch congratulate and applaud himſelf in the *golden* Purchace of his Frauds and Oppreſſions? How did he vaunt of his *own* Prudence, and *good* Conduct, and ſtrut and ſwell with *munificent* Conceits of the *happy* Condition he was now arrived to when all of a ſudden his *unprepared* Soul was ſurprized with a Summons to Eternity? And then how *blank* did the *Fool* look upon the *fatal* News, that *that* Night muſt put an End to all his Hopes and Pleaſures, and deprive him of all thoſe *future* Injoyments with which he had promiſed to recompence all his *paſt* Toils and Labours? With what Regret and Reluctancy was he dragg'd from the *dear* Purchaſe of his Sweat and Sin? and in what Agonies of Horror did he groan out his *wretched* Spirit, when inſtead of injoying the *Goods he had laid up for many Years*, he felt himſelf ſinking into a *woful* Eternity, and lie weltring *there* in *unquenchable* Flames, whilſt he hoped to have been wallowing *here* in Eaſe and Voluptuouſneſs? But ſuppoſe we ſhould injoy the many Years Eaſe which this

this *vain-glorious* Fool was diſappointed of; alas thoſe Years will quickly expire, and *Threeſcore and ten*, or *Fourſcore* at moſt, is the *utmoſt* Period we can hope to arrive to; but then from thence commenſes an *Eternity* of Miſery which *Millions* of *Millions* of Ages can neither ſhrink nor exhauſt, and compared with the *longeſt* Life of Pleaſure hath not the Proportion of one *ſingle* moment. So that if in Exchange for our Souls we could purchaſe a Leaſe of Life as long as *Methuſelah*'s, and a Leaſe of Happineſs parallel to that Life, yet in the Concluſion we ſhould find it a moſt *woful* Bargain; becauſe when both theſe Leaſes are expired, as they muſt at laſt though it be *long* firſt, we muſt remove into a State of *intollerable* Miſery, whoſe Duration will be always equally becauſe it will be always infinitely *diſtant* from a Period; and when we are there, all that *long* Train of Happineſs that is *paſt* will ſeem but a Minute's Dream in Compariſon of that *Eternity* of Miſery that is to come. But, *O good God*, when for *thirty* or *forty* Years Pleaſure upon Earth, I have ſuffered a *thouſand* Years Torment in *Hell*, and after that have *endleſs Thouſands of Thouſands* more to ſuffer, how dearly ſhall I rue my *own* Folly and Madneſs, that for the ſake of a *few* Moments Pleaſure have

run

run my ſelf headlong into ſuch an *endleſs* Miſery! Conſider therefore, O my Soul! within a *little* while all theſe *outward* Goods, which I have purchaſed by my Sin, will ſignify no more to me than if they had never been, and all their *alluring* Reliſhes will be gone and forgotten *for ever*; but then for *Ten thouſand* Millions of Ages after I ſhall be feeling the Smart, and enduring the Stings of them. When all my *ill-gotten* Wealth is ſhrunk into a *Winding-ſheet*, and my *vaſt* Poſſeſſions into *ſix foot* of Earth, and I have none of its Pomps or Pleaſures *left* either to go along with, or to follow after me, then will the Guilt of all ſtick cloſe to me, and raiſe a Cry on me as *high* as the Tribunal of *God*; a Cry that will draw down an *everlaſting* Vengeance on my Head, and ring Peals of Thunder in my Conſcience *for ever*. Lord! what a *poor* Amends then is the *momentary* Injoyments of the Goods of this World to me, that after a *few* Years muſt paſs into *another*, and there languiſh away a *long* Eternity under the *intollerable* Anguiſh of a *damned* Spirit.

And thus you ſee, upon a *juſt* Survey of the Gains of this World, and the Loſs of a Soul, how infinitely *ſhort* the Happineſs of the *one* is to make us any *tollerable* Compen-

ſation for the Miſeries of the *other*. And if the Gain of all the World be *too little* to countervail this Loſs, what *miſerable* Loſers are the Generality of Men that forfeit their Souls upon a far *leſs valuable* Conſideration? For no Man was ever yet, or is ever like to be ſo *proſperous* in his Sin, as to gain the whole World by it; that is a *Scramble* in which Millions are ingaged, and of which every one will be catching a Share. But, alas, for the Generality, the Purchaſe of Mens Sin is ſo *ſmall* and *inconſiderable*, that it is ſcarce a *valuable* Conſideration for the Soul of a Rat. For what doth the *common* Swearer get by all his *ſenſleſs* and *impertinent* Oaths, which are capable of ſerving no *other* Purpoſe but only to ſtop the Gaps of his Speech, or to man his Rage, and rave, and play the Fool with a little more genteely? What doth the Drunkard gain by all his Intemperances, but only a *ſhort* Fit of *frantick* Mirth, and *extravagant* Jollity; which, after a *few* Hours, ends in a *ſleepleſs* Night, a *ſick*, and *uneaſy* Stomach, and a *ſottiſh* Confuſion over all his Senſes? What doth the *envious* and *malicious* Man get by all his *ſtudied* Miſchiefs and Revenges? When he hath pluck'd out his Enemy's Eye, he cannot put it into his own Head, nor can he increaſe the Stock of his *own* Happineſs by diminiſhing his Adverſaries. When he hath made

made *another* the *worſe*, he is never the *better* for it; nor do his Injuries grow *leſs* by being retaliated: So that he vexes and diſquiets himſelf to no purpoſe, but to make his Enemy bleed; he keeps his *own* Wound *green*, and conſequently multiplies Evils in vain, and proſecutes Miſchief only for Miſchief's ſake. I confeſs there are ſome Vices that are not altogether ſo *unprofitable* as theſe; in *ſome* Vices there is a Proſpect of *worldly* Gain and Greatneſs, in *others* of *ſenſitive* Pleaſure and Delight; but alas, when after a *few* days Injoyment of thoſe Gains and Pleaſures, I am called away from them, and tranſported into a *woful* Eternity, there to expiate the Guilts of them with thoſe *ſharp* and *everlaſting* Torments I ſhall be made to endure, how ſhall I be aſtoniſhed at my own *deſperate* Folly to think what a *mad* Bargain I have made? what an Happineſs I have ſold to purchaſe thoſe Gains? what a Miſery I have incurred to graſp and injoy thoſe Pleaſures? O! now what would I give for a *Goal-delivery* from *Hell*, or but for the *leaſt* Mitigation of my Agonies and Torments! If I had all the Wealth that I purchaſed by my Sin, and ten thouſand times more, how willingly would I part with it to bribe my Flames, and corrupt my Tormentors? O! now I ſhall wiſh a thouſand and a thouſand times that I had rather choſen to

famiſh for want of Bread, than to injoy thoſe *accurſed* Profits and Pleaſures that were the Fruits and Wages of mine Iniquities; but now alas it will be *too late* to Repent. As yet we have the Opportunity to retrieve *our own* Folly, and to revoke and cancel this our *deſperate* Bargain, and by our *ſerious* Repentance and *hearty* Renunciation of the Temptations of this World, we may releaſe our ſelves from our Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell. But if we out-ſtay our Opportunity a *few* Moments longer, till Death hath put an end to it, the *fatal* Bargain will be ſealed paſt all Revocation.

OF

OF THE *Divinity & Incarnation* OF OUR SAVIOUR.

JOHN I. 14.

And the Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father) full of Grace and Truth.

THESE Words contain *Three diſtinct* Propoſitions; I. *The Word was made Fleſh:* II. *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth:* III. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father.* Of each of theſe I intend to diſcourſe in their order.

I. The firſt is, That *the Word was made Fleſh.* In handling of which I ſhall do theſe three Things:

1. Shew you what we are here to underſtand by *The Word.*
2. Why it is called *The Word.*
3. What we are to underſtand by *The Word's* being made Fleſh.

1. What is meant by *the Word?* I anſwer in general, That by *the Word* here we are to underſtand Chriſt: For in the following Verſe you will find that this *Word* was He of whom *John the Baptiſt* was the *Forerunner,* and to whom he bare Witneſs, ſaying, *This was he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.* And in the other *Evangeliſts* you will find that it was *Chriſt* whoſe Forerunner the *Baptiſt* was, and to whom he gave this Teſtmiony, as you may ſee at your leiſure, *Matth.*3.11. and *Mark* 1.7. *Luke* 3.16. where you find *John Baptiſt* giving the ſame Teſtimony to *Chriſt* which here he gives to *the Word,* eſpecially *v.* 27. of this Chapter. Which is a plain Evidence that *Chriſt* and the *Word* are only *different* Titles of the *ſame* Perſon. But that I may more particularly explain to you the Meaning of this Phraſe,

I will briefly deliver my Senſe of it in theſe *following* Propoſitions:

1. That this Phraſe, *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminence* applied to a *particular* Subject, is derived into the *New Teſtament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. That the *New Teſtament* giving no *diſtinct* Explication of it, it is moſt *ſafe* and *reaſonable* to fetch the Senſe of it from that *ancient* Theology whence it was derived.

3. That the Theology from whence it was derived, uſes it to ſignify a *vital* and *Divine Subſiſtence*.

4. That therefore our *Saviour*, to whom it is applied in the *New Teſtament*, is that *vital* and *Divine Subſiſtence*.

1. That this Phraſe *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminency* applied to a *particular* Subject, is derived into the *New Teſtament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Which will plainly appear to any one that ſhall conſider the *exact* Agreement between thoſe Titles and Characters which are given to our *Saviour* in the *New Teſtament*, and thoſe which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* give to the *Word*, ſo often mentioned in their *Theology*. For as for this Phraſe ὁ λόγος, *The Word*, it is very anciently uſed in the Writings both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For Rab. *Azariel* in

his Treatiſe of Holineſs, quotes it out of the *Book of the Creation*, which was written by Rab. *Abraham* an *ancient Cabaliſt*, who the *Jews* ſay was the *Patriarch Abraham* himſelf. *The Spirit*, ſaith he, meaning the moſt High God, *bringeth forth the Word and the Voice, and theſe Three are one God.* Thus alſo it is frequently uſed in the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* as eminently appropriated to a *Divine Perſon:* So in *Iſa.* 45. 17. inſtead of *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the Lord*, they read it, *by the Word of the Lord*; and *Jerem.* 1. 8. inſtead of *I am with thee*, they read, *becauſe my Word is with thee:* and *Gen.* 15. 1. inſtead of *I am thy ſhield*, they read, *my Word is thy ſhield*; and ſo in ſundry other places. And, which is very obſervable, *Pſ.* 110. 1. inſtead of *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, they read, *The Lord ſaid unto his Word*; which Words our *Saviour* applies to himſelf, *Matth.* 22. 44. as being himſelf that *Eternal Word*, or λόγος, there mentioned. And in the ſame Senſe alſo it was very anciently uſed in the Writings of the *Gentile Philoſophy*. Thus *Zeno*, as *Tertullian* tells us [1], ſpeaks of a λόγος by which the World was made, and which he calls *Fate*, and *God*, and *the Soul of Jupiter*. And the *ancient Orpheus*, as he is quoted

[1] Tertull. Apologet. c. 36. Pam. Hunc (*i.e.* λόγον) Zeno determinat factitorem qui cuncta in diſpoſitione formaverit, eundemq; & fatum vocari & Deum & animum Jovis.

quoted by *Clemens Alexandrinus* [1], exhorts Men *to behold and contemplate the Divine Word, who is the immortal King of Heaven.* And *Plato* [2] tells us, that the Motions of the Stars were disposed and ordered by *the Word.* By which it's plain that this Phrase was used as appropriate to a *Divine Person*, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, long before the Writing of the *New Testament.* And that the *New Testament* derived it from their Writings is apparent; for that it attributes to *Christ* the *same* Titles and Characters which they were wont to attribute to the λόγος. Thus as the *New Testament* calls *Christ* the *Messias*, *The Word*, so the *Chaldee Paraphrase* expresly tells us that *Messias* is called *the Word of God*, *Oseæ*, *cap.* 7. Thus as St. *Paul* calls him the *King immortal*, so *Orpheus* in the afore-named Place calls him ἄνακτα ἀθάνατον, *the King immortal.* And whereas *Christ is said to be the Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *to be the shining forth of his Glory, and the express Character of his Person*, *Heb.* 1. 3. *Philo* calls him χαρακτὴρ θεοῦ [3], the σκιὰ and εἰκὼν θεοῦ [4]; that is, *the Character of God, and the Shadow and Image of God:* And

[1] Stromat. L. 5. p. 607. Εἰς δὲ λόγον θεῖον βλέψας, τούτῳ προσέδρευε, Εὐθύνων κραδίης νοερὸν κύτος, ἐν δ' ἐπίβαινε Ἀτραπιτοῦ, μοῦνον δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἄνακτα Ἀθάνατον.

[2] Epinomis.

[3] Lib. 2. de Agriculturâ. p. 169. Edit. Genev. 1613.

[4] Leg. Alleg l. 2. p. 60.

And *Plotin*, *That it is a Light ſtreaming forth from God, even as Brightneſs doth from the Sun* [1]. And as St. *John* in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter tells us, That *the Word was from the beginning with God, and that it was God*; ſo *Philo* tells us, that *by Prerogative of Elderſhip he abideth with the Father*; and *Zeno*, in the afore-named place, *that he is God*; and *Plotin* [2] tells us, *That being the Word of God, and the Image of God, he is inſeparably conjoined with him.* And whereas *Chriſt* tells us, That *he is the Light of the World*, *John* 8. 12. *the Manna which cometh down from Heaven*; and *the Bread of life*, *Joh.* 6. 33, 35. The ſame *Philo* ſtiles him *the Word*, *the Light* [3], *the Manna* [4], the ἄρτος and τροφὴ ἣν χορηγεῖ ὁ θεὸς τῇ ψυχῇ [5]; that is, *the Bread and Food which God hath given to the Soul.* And whereas it is ſaid, that *the Father is in Chriſt*, that *he dwells and abides in him*, *Joh.* 14. 10. the ſame Author ſays πατρὸς δὲ οἶκος ὁ λόγος, ἐν ᾧ διαιτᾶται [6]; that is, *the Word is the Houſe of the Father, in whom he dwells.* Whereas *Chriſt* is ſaid to *have a Name*, *Phil.* 2. 9. and to be advanced *above all Principalities*

[1] Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Philo de Opif. mundi. p. 4, 5.

[4] Quod det. pot. inſ. ſol. p. 137.

[5] Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 70, & 71.

[6] De Migrat. Abrah. p. 304.

palities and Powers, Eph. 1. 21. *Philo* tells us that this *Divine Word* is ὑπεράνω παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ὅσα γέγονε[1]; that is, *above all Worlds, and the moſt ancient of all things that are.* Whereas *Chriſt* is ſaid to be *the High Prieſt over the Houſe of God*, Heb. 10. 21. *Philo* tells us, that *the World is the Temple of God*, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ πρωτόγονος αὐτοῦ θεοῦ λόγος[2]; that is, *in which the Firſt-born Divine Word is the High Prieſt.* Whereas *Chriſt* is ſaid to be *the Son of God, and the Firſt-born of every Creature*; *Plato* calls him, *the begotten Son of the Good*[3]; *Plotin, the Son of God*[4]; and *Philo, the Firſt-begotten Son and Word of God*[5]. Again, whereas *God* is ſaid to have created the World by Chriſt, *Heb.* 1. 2. and to have committed the Government of it to him; *Philo* calls the θεῖος λόγος, the ὁ πανδαμάτωρ καὶ κυβερνήτης τῶν παντὸς[6]; that is, *the Governour of all things*, and the ὕπαρχος θεοῦ[7], *the Vice-roy of God*; and alſo ὄργανον θεοῦ δι' οὗ ὁ κόσμος κατεσκευάσθη[8]; that is, *the Inſtrument of God by whom he made the World.* As in *Chriſt the Fulneſs*

[1] Leg. Alleg. p. 71.
[2] De Somniis, p. 463.
[3] De Repub. l. 6.
[4] Enn. 5. l. 8. c. 12.
[5] De Somn. p. 463.
[6] De Cherub. p. 88.
[7] De Somn. p. 466.
[8] Lib. Cherub p. 100.

neſs of the Godhead is ſaid *to dwell*, Coloſ. 2. 9. ſo *Plotin* tells us of the νῦς, or λόγος, *that it is filled with God* [1]. As *Chriſt* is called the *great Shepherd of our Souls*, 1 Pet. 2. 25. ſo *Philo* tells us, that *God, who is King and Paſtor of the World, hath appointed the Word his firſt-begotten Son*, τὸν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγέλης ὅιατι μεγάλω βασιλέως ὕπαρχος διαδέξασθαι [2], *to undertake the Care of his ſacred Flock, as his own Vice-roy and Subſtitute*: and accordingly in the ſame place he makes *The Word* to be that *Angel* whom *God* had promis'd to ſend before the Camp of *Iſrael* to conduct them through the *Wilderneſs*. In ſhort, as the *Angels* are ſaid to be *ſubject* unto *Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 3. 22. and as *Chriſt* is ſaid to be the *Angel* or *Meſſenger* of *God*, Joh. 9. 4. ſo *Philo* calls *the moſt ancient Word* the ὁ ἀρχάγγελος [3]; that is, *the Prince of the Angels*, and the τὸν ἄγγελον θεοῦ [4]; *the Angel or Meſſenger of God*. And, to name no more, as *Chriſt* is called the *Mediator of the new Covenant*, Heb. 12. 24. and the *Interceſſor between God and Man*, Heb. 7. 25. and the *Propitiation* and *Atonement*: So ſaith *Philo*, (which is highly worthy of our

[1] Ennead. 5. l. 3. c. 12.

[2] De Agricult. p. 152.

[3] Quæſt Rerum divin. hær. p. 397.

[4] De Somn. p. 456.

our Obſervation) the word ἱκέτης μὲν ἐστι, &c. [1] *is the Interceſſor for Mortals with the immortal God*, and alſo *the Embaſſador of that great King to his Subjects*; *which Office*, ſaith he, *he willingly undertook, ſaying, I will ſtand in the middle between the Lord and you, as being neither unborn as God, nor born as you; but being a Medium between thoſe two Extreams, I will be a Pledge for both; for his Creatures, that they ſhall not utterly apoſtatize from him; for God, that he will not be wanting in his Fatherly Care towards them.* And in another place he tells us, that the θεῖος λόγος is τῆς εἰρεσκείας κεφαλὴ καὶ τέλος [2]; that is, *the Beginning and the End of God's Good-will to the World*; which is all one with Propitiation.

[1] Quæſt. Rerum Divin. her. p. 397.

[2] De Somniis, p. 447.

And theſe Authorities of *Philo* I have the rather inſiſted upon, becauſe he being a *Jew* and a *Platonick Philoſopher*, muſt needs underſtand the *Theology* of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and living about the Time of our *Saviour*, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have written in *Terms* that were then in uſe, and were very well underſtood both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*: And if ſo, then it muſt neceſſarily follow that this Phraſe *The Word*, ſo *common* in that *Author*, was very commonly uſed both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*

Gentiles in our Saviour's Time, and conſequently that it was derived from them, and ſo appropriated to our *Saviour* by the *inſpired Writers* of the *New Teſtament*. And indeed it is not to be imagined how thoſe *inſpired Writers* ſhould ever have ſo exactly agreed with the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the Titles and Characters of the *Eternal Word*, had not either they themſelves, or *the Spirit of God*, which dictated to them, purpoſely derived it from them.

2. That the *New Teſtament* giving no *diſtinct* Explication of this Phraſe *The Word*, it is moſt *ſafe* and *reaſonable* to fetch the Senſe of it from that *ancient Theology* whence it was derived. I do not deny but it is uſual with all Writers to uſe *Terms* and *Phraſes* by way of Accommodation, and to illuſtrate their Senſe by alluding to ſomething that is like it; and therefore are not always to be underſtood in the Senſe which thoſe *Terms* and *Phraſes* do moſt commonly ſignify, but in a Senſe that hath ſome Proportion with it, as the Drift and Connection of their Diſcourſe doth plainly intimate. But when Writers uſe Words in a *literal* Senſe, without any Note of Alluſion, and without explaining themſelves into any *different* Senſe, either they muſt mean the *ſame* Thing which thoſe Words do commonly ſignify, or elſe they muſt

muſt mean to deceive and impoſe upon their Readers. And thus ſtands the Caſe before us; our *Saviour* is here ſtiled *The Word*, a *Term of Art* which was very *common* both in the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile Philoſophy*; and neither here, nor any where elſe, is there the *leaſt* Intimation that he is called ſo, only by way of Alluſion; nor is it in all the *New Teſtament* explained into any *other* Senſe than that wherein it was commonly uſed; and therefore the Intent of the *Sacred Writers* in uſing it muſt be either to denote the *ſame* thing which it ſignified before, or to deceive and impoſe upon the World. But doubtleſs if the *Holy Spirit*, which inſpired thoſe Writers, had meant any thing elſe by it than what it ordinarily ſignifies, he would have told us of it, and not have given us ſuch an *unavoidable* Occaſion to miſtake in ſo *great* a Doctrine, by clothing its Senſe in ſuch a *Phraſe* as generally ſignifies what he never meant. For when he called *Chriſt* by the *ſame* Name, and attributed the *ſame* Titles and Characters by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to deſcribe their ΛΟΓΟΣ, he could not but foreſee that all *inquiſitive* Perſons would be apt to conclude that he meant the *ſame* thing; and therefore if he had not meant ſo, he would doubtleſs either not have given him that Name, and thoſe Titles,

Titles, or elſe, to prevent our being impoſed upon by them, he would have explained them into ſome *other* meaning; which ſince he hath not done, we may ſafely and rationally conclude that he meant the ſame Thing by this Name, and thoſe Titles with thoſe from whom he did derive them; and conſequently that the moſt *certain* way for us to underſtand what is the Senſe of Chriſt's being *The Word*, is to conſider what thoſe *Jews* and *Gentiles* meant by it from whoſe *Philoſophy* it was firſt borrowed and derived.

3. That both the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile Theology* uſed this Phraſe *The Word*, to ſignify a *Vital* and *Divine Subſiſtence*. For as for the *Jews*, it's plain that by *The Word* they meant the *Meſſias*; and therefore, *Pſ.* 110. which they ſay contains the Myſteries of the *Meſſias*, the *Chaldee Paraphraſe*, inſtead of *the Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, read *the Lord ſaid unto his Word*, that is conſequently to his *Meſſias*. And Rab. *Arama* upon *Geneſis*, explaining that Paſſage in the 107 *Pſ.* 20. *The Lord ſent forth his Word, and they were healed*; expreſly tells us, that by this *Word* is meant the *Meſſias*. And Rab. *Simeon* the Son of *Johni* expounding thoſe Words of *Job* 19. 26. *Yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God*, ſaith, that the Mercy which proceeds from the *higheſt* Wiſdom of *God*,

God ſhall be crowned by *The Word*, and take Fleſh of a Woman; by which it's plain that by *The Word* he underſtood the *Meſſias*. And that by the *Meſſias* they underſtood a *Divine Subſiſtence*, is evident from *ſundry* Places in the *Chaldee Paraphraſe*; which often applies the Name *Jehovah* to the *Meſſias*; which according to the Opinion of the *Jews*, ought not to be imparted to any Creature; as particularly, *Iſa.* 28. 5. *Jehovah Sabbaoth* (for ſo it is in the *Hebrew*) *ſhall be a Crown of Glory unto the reſidue of his People*; which thoſe Interpreters underſtand concerning the *Meſſias*. So alſo *Iſa.* 18. 7. *In that time ſhall the Preſent be brought unto the Lord of Hoſts*; that is, ſay they, unto the *Meſſias*. So alſo, *Jerem.* 33. 16. By *Jehovah our Righteouſneſs*, they underſtand the *Meſſias*; and by the Name of the *Everlaſting*, *Moſes Haderſan* underſtands the Name of the *Meſſias*, or *Anointed King*. And certainly had they not believed the *Meſſias* to be a *Divine Subſiſtence*, they would never have attributed to him this *incommunicable* Name of God; of which they had ſo *high* a Veneration, that they thought it *too* ſacred for *any* Creature to name, and much more to aſſume. And the *Commentary* upon the *fourth Pſalm* expreſly ſaith, *Becauſe the Gentiles ceaſe not to ask us, Where is our*

God, the time will come that God will ſit among the Righteous, ſo as they ſhall be able to point him out with the finger; which plainly refers to the Coming of the *Meſſias*. And ſo alſo the *Septuagint* change *Shaddai*, the *undoubted* Name of the *Omnipotent God*, into ΛΟΓΟΣ, *The Word, Ezek.* 1. 24. where, inſtead of *the Voice of God*, (as it is in the *Hebrew*) they read φωνὴ τῦ λόγυ, *the Voice of the Word of God*. And ſo alſo the *afore-named Paraphraſe*, as I have already hinted, doth often uſe the *Word of God* for *God* himſelf, and that more eſpecially with relation to the Creation of the World. Thus inſtead of *I made the Earth, Iſa.* 45. 12. they read it, *I by my Word made the Earth*: And inſtead of *God made Man, Gen.* 1. 27. the *Jeruſalem Targum* reads, *And the Word of the Lord* made Man: And inſtead of *They heard the Voice of the Lord, Gen.* 3. 8. the *Paraphraſe* reads it, *And they heard the Voice of the Word of the Lord God.* And *Philo* expreſly calls *this Word* the δεύτερον θεὸν, or *Second God* next to the πατέρα τῶν πάντων.

And as the *Jews* believed *The Word* to be a *Divine Subſiſtence*, ſo did the *Gentiles* alſo. For ſo *Numenius* the *Pythagorean*, as he is quoted by St. *Cyril* [1], calls the *Father* the *Firſt*, and the *Word* the *Second God*; and

[1] Cyril cont. Julian. l. 8.

and *Plotin* tells us [1], *that this Word, or Image of God, beholdeth God, and is inſeparably joined with him*; and *Porphyry*, as he is cited by the *fore-named* Father [2], tells us that the *Eſſence of God extends to Three In-beings*, viz. *the higheſt Good, which is the Father, and the Maker of all things, which is the Word, and the Soul of the World*; and theſe he alſo calls the *Firſt*, and *Second*, and *Third God*. And of *Pythagoras Proclus* the *Platoniſt* affirms, *that he commended Three Gods together in ONE*, (even as *Plato* alſo doth) the *Second* of which was the *Word* or *Wiſdom*, whereunto he attributes the Creation of the World. And *Plato*, in his 6th Epiſtle, ſo far owns the *Divinity* of the *Word*, that he earneſtly exhorts his Friends that they ſhould ὑπομνύειν τὸν τῶν πάντων θεὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶνδε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, τοῦτο ἡγεμόνα καὶ αἰτίαν πατέρα κυρίου; that is, *invocate God the Governour of all things that are and ſhall be, and alſo the Lord and Father of that Prince and Governour*; by the *firſt* of which he evidently means *The Word*, ſince 'tis to *the Word* that he elſewhere [3] attributes the Government of the *Stars* and *Heavenly Bodies*. By all which it is apparent, that by *The Word* they underſtood ſome *Divine Subſiſtence*, whoſe

[1] Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.

[2] Cyril. ibid. l. 1.

[3] Plat. Epinom.

Nature is exalted above all *finite* Beings whatſoever; and therefore,

4. And laſtly, Our *Saviour*, to whom this Phraſe *The Word* is applied, muſt be that *Divine Perſon* or *Subſiſtence*. And ſo we find him ſtiled in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Which Expreſſions are ſo exactly agreeable to the Phraſe of the *Gentile Theology*, that *Amelius* the Diſciple of *Plotin*, and a *great* Enemy to the *Chriſtians*, was forced to acknowledge that this is that *Word* which was from *Everlaſting*, and by whom all things were made, as *Heraclitus* ſuppoſed: And, *per Jovem*, ſaith he, *Barbarus iſte*, meaning St. *John*, *cum noſtro* Platone *conſentit, Verbum Dei in Ordine Principii eſſe*[1]. *This Barbarian is of our* Plato's *Mind, that the Word of God is ranked among the Principles.* And indeed, unleſs we underſtand this Place of the *Eternal Deity* of *The Word*, I know not how it will be poſſible to make any *tolerable* Senſe of it; for if by *In the Beginning* here, we underſtand, as the *Socinians* would have us, in the *beginning of the Goſpel* when *John Baptiſt* began to preach, the Words will imply a *groſs* Tautology, and the Senſe of them muſt be this; that *Chriſt* was when *John*

[1] St. Auſtin. De Civit. Dei, l. 10.

John Baptiſt preached that he was, or which is all one, that he was when he was. For how can it be worthy of an *Apoſtle* ſo ſolemnly to aſſert, that *the Word* had a *Being* in the Beginning of the *Goſpel*, when we know the *Baptiſt* taught as much himſelf? who therefore came *baptizing with water, that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael*, *Joh.* 1. 31. And when St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, who wrote before, taught us more than this, *viz.* That he was in being *thirty* Years before, when we are ſure it was as true of any *other* then living as of *the Word*, even of *Judas* that betrayed him, and *Pilate* who condemned him. By *in the Beginning*, therefore muſt be meant the *Beginning* of the World; and that even then, *the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* So *Phil.* 2.6,7. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men.* From whence theſe *three* Concluſions do moſt naturally reſult; *Firſt*, That *Chriſt* was *in the form of a Servant* as ſoon as he was made Man: *Secondly*, That he was *in the form of God* before he was *in the form of a Servant*: And, *Thirdly*, That he was in the *form of God*; that is, did as really and truly ſubſiſt in the *Divine Na-*

ture, as in the *form of a Servant*, or in the Nature of Man. For the Words literally tranſlated run thus; But emptied himſelf, taking the Form of a Servant, being in the Likeneſs of Men: Which plainly implies, that *Chriſt* was *full* before he emptied himſelf, that he emptied himſelf by taking the *form of a Servant*, that he took the *form of a Servant* by being made in the *likeneſs of Men*; which *Emptying* preſuppoſes a *precedent Plenitude*, and which *Plenitude* conſiſted in being ſo in the *form of God* as to think it *no Robbery to be equal with God*. So *Rev.* 1. 11. he ſolemnly proclaims his *own* Divinity; *I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*; which is the *incommunicable* Title by which *God* deſcribes his own Being, and diſtinguiſhes it from all others. And *Iſa.* 44. 6. *I am the firſt, and I am the laſt, and beſides me there is no God.* Theſe and many other *plain* Aſſertions there are in the *New Teſtament*, of the *Eternal Deity* of the *Bleſſed Word*. But ſince the *Eternal God* was conſtantly both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſignified by this Phraſe *the Word*, there is no Reaſon to imagine that St. *John* ſhould make uſe of it in any *other* Notion; ſince in ſo doing he would have impoſed upon the World, and taken an *effectual* Courſe to make us believe that he meant what he never intended.

And

And ſo I have done with the *firſt* Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you what is here meant by Chriſt's being *the Word*; the Deſign of which, you ſee is to expreſs his *Eternal Godhead* and *Divinity*.

2. I now proceed to the *next* Thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you for what Reaſon it is that he is here called *The Word?* In anſwer whereunto, it is to be conſidered that the Word ΛΟΓΟΣ hath a *twofold* Signification: *Firſt*, It ſignifies *Reaſon*, which is the inferring *one* thing from *another*, and this is the Birth and Off-ſpring of the Mind. *Secondly*, It ſignifies *Speech*, which is an *audible* Expreſſion of our Thoughts and Reaſonings, and this is the Image and Interpreter of our Minds; and it is alſo the *Executer* of the Mind, eſpecially in thoſe who are in *Sovereign* Authority, and do rule by their Word and Command. Now our *Bleſſed Saviour* is called *the Word* upon *both* theſe Accounts, both as he is the *Reaſon*, and the *Speech* of God; and accordingly his being *the Word* denotes theſe four Things:

1*ſt*. His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father.

2*dly*. His being the *perfect* Image of that Mind.

3*dly*. His being the *Interpreter* of his Father's Mind to us.

4*thly*. His being the *Executer* of his Father's Mind.

1*ſt*. His being *generated* of the Mind of the Father, even as our *Word* or *Reaſon* is the Iſſue and Off-ſpring of our Minds. For it was the Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that the *Eternal Word* is nothing elſe but that moſt *perfect Notion*, *Idea*, and *Conception* which *God* from the Beginning had formed of *himſelf*, and all *other* Beings in his own Mind. For thus the *Jews* tell us, that every thing *below* hath ſome Root above; which Roots, ſay they, are the *Sephiroth*, or Seals by which all theſe *inferiour* Subſtances are ſtamp'd, and ſhaped, and faſhion'd; and theſe Seals, they tell us, are thoſe moſt *perfect Ideas* of things which *God* did form in his own Mind, according to which he faſhioned all the Beings that are in the World. *For*, ſay they, [1] *all the Three Worlds, that is, the Rational, the Senſitive, and Inanimate, were printed with the ſame Print, and ſealed with the ſame Seal*; (that is, that *great* Seal in the Mind of *God*, conſiſting of the *Ideas* of all things) *and that which is ſealed, and receiveth the Sealing here below, is like to the Shape and Form of thoſe things*

[1] Vide *Dr.* Cudworth *of the Union of Chriſt and the Church.*

things above which did ſeal and ſtamp the Signature upon them. And theſe *three* Worlds, ſay they, being one below *another*, *God* ſet upon them the Seal of *Sephiroth* ſo *hard* that he printed them quite through the Bottom of them, that is, he ſtamp'd them all into an *exact* Reſemblance to thoſe *Ideas* which he had formed of them in his own Mind. So that according to them, before *God* made the World he framed the *Idea* and *Model* of it in his own Underſtanding, which, together with that *Idea* or Notion which from all *Eternity* he conceived of himſelf, they called the ΛΟΓΟΣ, or *Eternal Word* of *God*. Hence *Philo* calls *the Word of God*, the εἰκόνα θεοῦ, and alſo the ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα [1], and the ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν [2]: And tells us, that as a City before it was made, exiſted only in the Mind of the Builder; ſo the World had no other Place, ἢ τὸν θεῖον λόγον τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμήσαντα; that is, *than the Divine Word that made it*. And afterwards he tells us, that the *Intellectual World*, that is, the World which contains the *Ideas* of all things, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἐστὶν ἢ θεοῦ λόγων ἤδη κοσμοποιοῦντος [3], *is nothing elſe but the Word of God now making the World.*

[1] De Mundi Opif. p. 5.
[2] Ibid. p. 3.
[3] Ibid. p. 4.

And

And accordingly the *Jews* call *The Word* the Wiſdom of *God*, and tell us [1], that *this Wiſdom is of the moſt inward Underſtanding of God, who beholds himſelf in himſelf.* From all which it is apparent that the *Jews* attributed the Original of this *Divine Word* to the *Mind* of the Father, it being, according to their *Divinity* nothing elſe but that moſt *perfect Conception* and *Idea* which *God* from *Everlaſting* formed of *himſelf*, and all *other* Beings, in his own Mind. In which Opinion the moſt *Divine Philoſophers* of the *Gentiles* alſo do moſt exactly conſent. And hence they generally call *The Word* the νοῦς, or *Underſtanding* of the Father, he being the *perfect Idea* or *Conception* by which the Father underſtands *himſelf* and all other things. And accordingly *Alcinous* tells us [2], that *both* Socrates *and* Plato *taught that God is a Mind, and that in the ſame there is a certain Idea which in reſpect of God, is that Knowledge which God hath of himſelf, and in reſpect of the World, is the Pattern or Mould thereof, and in reſpect of it ſelf, is very Eſſence.* And *Plotin* tells us [3], that *God is both the Party that is conceived*

[1] *Rab.* Iſaac Ben Schola *on the laſt Verſes of the* 111 *&* 112 *Pſalms.*

[2] Alcin de Doctrinâ Platonis.

[3] Plot. Enn. 5. l. 6. c. 1.

ceived in the Mind or Underſtanding, and alſo the Party that conceives him; and he makes *The Word* to be that which *God* doth mind in himſelf, which is *Himſelf*, and his own *immenſe* Perfections; and that the Nature of that *Idea* of himſelf which he beholds in *himſelf* is an Act that iſſues from him, which conſiſts in beholding and minding of himſelf, and in beholding him becomes the *ſelf ſame* thing with him. And this *Underſtanding* or *Knowledge* which *God* hath of himſelf, he calls [1], *the Son of the Sovereign Father, that bears the like Reſemblance to him, as the Light doth to the Sun in the Firmament.* And, to name no more, *Porphyry*, as he is quoted by St. *Cyril*, tells us, *That it was the Doctrine of* Plato, *that of the Good*, (which elſewhere he calls the Father) *is begotten an Underſtanding in a manner unknown to Men, in which are all things that truly are, and the Eſſences of all things that have a Being*; that is, the *ſubſtantial Ideas* of *God*, and all *created* things whatſoever. And upon this account it is, that they call this *Divine* Subſiſtence *The Word*, becauſe it was generated by the *Mind* of the Father, even as our Words are generated by our Minds. And accordingly the *ancient Jews*, and *Chriſtian Fathers*, do generally expound that

[1] Enn. 5. l. 8. c. 12. & Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 7.

great

great Elogium of *Wiſdom*, *Prov.* 8. concerning the *Eternal Word*; where it is ſaid, that *Wiſdom was ſet up from everlaſting, and poſſeſſed by God in the beginning of his way; that it was brought forth by him before the World*; and that when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then *was it by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoycing always before him*, v. 22.---31. And this Notion the *New Teſtament* doth plainly refer to when it calls *Chriſt* the *Wiſdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. which is the ſame Title that both *Jews* and *Platoniſts* give to *The Word* upon the account of his being that *Eternal Knowledge* and *Underſtanding* which *God* hath of *himſelf* and all *other* Beings; and in this, *John* 1.4. the *Apoſtle* ſeems plainly to hint this Notion to us; for ſpeaking there of *The Word*, *In him*, ſaith he, *was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men.* Now I think it will be hard to give any *natural* Account how that *Life* that was in *The Word* ſhould enlighten Men, unleſs we ſuppoſe his very *Life* and *Being* to conſiſt in *Knowledge* and *Underſtanding*; for by the *Light of Men* here is plainly meant that *Divine* Knowledge which is revealed to the World by *Chriſt*; and this *Divine* Knowledge he tells us is the very *Life* of *The Word*, or the *Life* that was in *The Word*: And afterwards

wards he expreſly calls *The Word* the *Light* it ſelf from whence all our Knowledge of *God* and Goodneſs is derived, *v.* 9. which is exactly the ſame with what *Philo* ſaith of *The Word*, *viz.* that *He is the Intellectual Sun that is altogether Light*; and with what *Plotin* ſaith of the νῦς. or *Divine Mind*, [1] *that he is a Light ſhed forth every where, ſtreaming from God, and begotten of him.* Which is a plain Evidence of Chriſt's being the *ſubſtantial Light, Knowledge*, or *Idea* of all things which *God* from *Everlaſting* formed in his own Mind, and of his being therefore called *the Word* of God, becauſe he is the *Off-ſpring* of God's Underſtanding, even as our Reaſon is the *Off-ſpring* of ours.

[1] Enn. 5. l. 1.

2*dly*. He is called *The Word* of *God*, becauſe he is the *perfect* Image of *God*, even as the Word is the Image of the Mind: For thus, as I have already told you, the *Eternal Word* is very frequently called the *Image* of *God* both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For ſo *Plotin* [2], that *this Divine Underſtanding, being the very Word of God, and Image of God, everlaſtingly beholds God, and cannot be ſeparated from him*; and [3] *that it is the begotten Iſſue, Word, and Image of the Sovereign God.* And *Plato* himſelf calls him

[2] Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.

[3] Ibid l. 2.

him [1] *the begotten Son of the Good, and moſt like unto him in all things*; the ἔκγονον τὸ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ὁμοιότατον ἐκείνῳ, and afterwards, τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔκγονον ὃν τἀγαθὸν ἐγέννησεν ἀνάλογον ἑαυτῷ; that is, *the begotten Son of the Good, who is moſt like unto himſelf.* And Rab. *Moſes* the Son of *Neheman*, as he is quoted by *Maſius*, proving that *that Angel of God's Preſence* which went before the Camp of *Iſrael* was the *Meſſias* or *Eternal Word*, tells us, that he is therefore called the *Angel of God's Preſence, nimirum quia ille Angelus eſt facies Dei*; *becauſe he is the Face of God, in whom God's Face was to be ſeen.* And ſo *Philo* the *Jew* alſo doth very frequently call *The Word* [2], the *Image and Reſemblance of God*, and the ἀπεικόνισμα, *the moſt perfect and exact Repreſentation of God.* For they ſuppoſe that *God* being *Omniſcient* he muſt neceſſarily know himſelf, and that knowing himſelf, neceſſarily he muſt act *ad extremum Virium*, to the utmoſt of his Power, even as all *other neceſſary* Agents do; that acting to the utmoſt of his Power, he muſt by knowing himſelf produce as perfect an *Image*, *Idea*, or *Notion* of himſelf in his own Underſtanding as it was poſſible for him to do; that it was poſſible for him to produce ſuch

[1] Plato de Repub. l. 6. p. 478.

[2] Philo Legis Alleg. l. 2. p. 60.

ſuch a *vital* and *ſubſtantial Idea* of himſelf as is veſted with all the *infinite* Perfections of his Nature; and conſequently that ſuch an *Idea* he hath produced, and that this *Idea* is the *Eternal Word*. For *God* can do whatſoever doth not imply a Contradiction; now there is nothing in *God* but what he can communicate without a Contradiction, but only *Self-Exiſtence*; that implies a Contradiction indeed, for *God* to cauſe *another* thing to be without any Cauſe, and to exiſt of it ſelf. But as for all his *other* Perfections he may communicate them; and when he acts neceſſarily, as he is ſuppoſed to do in the Generation of *the Word*, he muſt, becauſe then he acts to his utmoſt Poſſibility. So then *The Word* muſt have the ſame *Nature, Eſſence*, and *Perfections* with the *Father*; and the only *imaginable* Difference between them muſt be this; that whereas the *Father* exiſts of himſelf, *the Word* exiſts of the *Father*; which is exactly agreeable to the *Catholick Notion* of *Chriſtians*. And indeed if it be granted that *God*, who is infinitely *knowing*, muſt neceſſarily know himſelf perfectly, then it will ſeem to follow, that there muſt be the *ſame* Perfections in that *Idea* or Notion by which he knows *himſelf*, that there are in himſelf; for elſe it is not one *perfect Idea* of him. And hence it is that our Notions

tions do ſo imperfectly *reſemble* things, becauſe we cannot communicate to them that *Life* and *Subſtance* that is in the things themſelves; and therefore if *God* knows himſelf perfectly, as he muſt needs do being infinitely *knowing*, he muſt communicate *Life* and *Subſtance* to the Notion of himſelf, or elſe 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his Life and Subſtance; and he muſt communicate to it all the *immenſe* Perfections of his own Nature, or elſe 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his own Perfections. So then the *Eternal Word*, which is here ſuppoſed to be the moſt *perfect* Notion of the *Father*, muſt be a *vital* and *ſubſtantial Idea*, endued with all the Perfections of the *Divine Nature*, which is alſo very agreeable with the *Chriſtian* Notion of the *Divine Word*: For he is deſcribed to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Character of his Perſon*, *Heb.* 1. 3. and being ſo he muſt neceſſarily be what *God* is, *i. e. God eſſential*, or elſe he cannot be the *perfect* Image, and *expreſs* Character of *God*. And accordingly in the *New Teſtament* he is called *God over all, bleſſed for ever*, *Rom.* 9. 5. and the Perfections of the *Divine Nature* are very frequently attributed to him, as particularly *Omniſcience*, *John* 16. 30. *Eternity*, *Heb.* 1. 12. and *Rev.* 22. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the begin-*

beginning and the end, the first and the last. So that upon this Account also he may very properly be called *The Word of God*, because as our Words are the Images of our Minds, so *He* is the most *perfect* Image of *God*.

3*dly.* He is called *The Word*, because he is the *Interpreter* of the Father's Mind, even as our Words also are the Interpreters of our Minds to *others*. And this *Philo* the *Jew* doth also take notice of as the *proper* Work and Office of *The Word* to be ἐξαγγελεὺς τοῦ ἡγεμόνος πρὸς τὸ ὑπήκοον [1], *the Embassador of the Great King to his Subjects, to communicate his Mind and Will to them*; and also *the Angel and Messenger of God to Men to declare his Will and Pleasure to them*: And that in the Execution of this Office he doth τοῖς μὲν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἃ χρὴ πράττειν ἐπιτάττων, τοῖς δὲ ὡς διδάσκαλος ὠφελίμως ἐπιστατῶν, τοῖς δὲ ὡς σύμβουλος νουθετῶν, &c. [2] *Some as a King he commands what they shall do, others as a School-master he profitably instructs, others as a Counsellor he faithfully admonishes; all which he performs as the Interpreter of the Mind of God.* And elsewhere he calls him the θεοειδὴς ἥλιος [3], the *Divine Sun that enlightens the Souls of Men*; and elsewhere he expressly calls him *the Interpreter of the Mind of God to*

[1] Quis rer. div. hær. p. 397.

[2] De Somn. p. 461.

[3] De Charitate, p. 552.

Men: So that it ſeems it was upon this Account as well as others, that He was called by the *Ancients*, *The Word of God*. And the ſame Account is given of it in the *New Teſtament*. So *Joh.* 1. 18. *No Man hath ſeen God at any time*; *the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him*. Where there is a *particular* Reaſon aſſigned, why though *other* Men interpreted the Mind of *God* to us, yet *Chriſt* alone is called *The Word of God*; becauſe he only was the *immediate* Interpreter of the *Divine* Will, even as the Word which we ſpeak is of ours. For he was in the very Boſom of the Father, and there underſtood his Mind not by the Inſtructions of an *Angel*, nor by *Dreams* and *Viſions*, nor only by the *Holy Ghoſt*, but by an *immediate* Intuition of his Thoughts and Purpoſes which from all *Eternity* were expoſed to his View and Proſpect. For as St. *Gregory Nazianzen* hath obſerved, He had the *ſame* Relation to the Father, as the *inward* Thought hath to the Mind, becauſe of his *intimate* Conjunction with him, and Power to declare him to the World. For the *Father* is known by the *Son*, who is a *brief* and *eaſy* Demonſtration of the *Father*, as every thing that is begotten is σιωπῶν λόγῳ, *the ſilent Word of that which doth beget it*.

4*thly*.

4*thly*. And laſtly, He is called *The Word*, becauſe he is the *Executor* of his Father's Will, even as the Word and Command of a King is the Executor of his Will and Pleaſure: For according to the Senſe of the *Ancients*, God hath from the very Beginning governed the World by his *eternal* ΛΟΓΟΣ, whom they therefore call the *Immortal King*, the *Governor of all things that are or ſhall be*, and the *Vice-Roy of the great God*, as I have already ſhewed you at large. And 'twas by this *Word* that *God* executed his Will when he made the World; *For by his Word he made the Heavens, and all the Hoſt of them, by the Breath of his mouth, Pſ.* 33. 6. He did but ſay the word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; and to his *powerful* and *efficacious Fiat* the whole Frame of Nature was but a *real Eccho*. For theſe Expreſſions, *Let there be Light*, and *let there be a Firmament*, &c. are not perhaps ſo to be underſtood as if *God* did actually pronounce thoſe Syllables, but they rather ſeem to be a *popular* Deſcription of the *infinite* Energy of the *Eternal Word* by which *God* made the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, to whom it was as eaſy to give Being to the World as it was to command it to be; and that Paſſage of the Pſalmiſt, *by the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*, and of the Author to the *Hebrews*,

Heb. 11. 3. that *the Worlds were framed by the Word of God*, ſeem rather to denote that *powerful* Act of Creation which was exerted by the *vital* and *ſubſtantial Word* of *God*; whereby he inſtantly, and as it were with a words ſpeaking, gave *Exiſtence* to thoſe Beings he intended to create, than any *articulate* Words or Phraſes pronounced by *God* himſelf; becauſe in this Chapter, and many *other* Places of the *New Teſtament*, it is expreſly ſaid that *God* made the World by *Chriſt*, who is that *living* and *ſubſtantial Word* that was with *God* from the Beginning. Well therefore may *Chriſt* be called *The Word* of *God*, ſince by him *God* doth as effectually execute his Will, as if it were done by the Word of his own Mouth. For *Chriſt* hath ſuch Power both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, that at his Word and Command all things are preſently done according to his Will; and therefore you may obſerve in that *Viſion* to St. *John*, *Rev.* 19. 13. *Jeſus*, being repreſented as the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, *clothed in a royal Purple Robe*, is called by the name of *the Word of God*, when he was executing the *Divine* Vengeance upon the *Nations* by that Power which he hath at God's Right-hand.

3. I now paſs on to the *third* and *laſt* Thing, namely, what we are to underſtand by *the Word's being made Fleſh*; of which I ſhall give you a *brief* Account, and then conclude with a few ſhort Inferences from the whole. Which Words, *being made Fleſh*, we ought not ſo to underſtand as if the *Eternal Word* was changed or converted into Fleſh, as *Cerinthus* taught; or as if the Fleſh was changed or converted into *the Word*, as *Valentinus* ridiculouſly aſſerted; for the *Deity* is *immutable*, and as it can be changed into *nothing*, ſo *nothing* can be changed into it. But by *Fleſh* we are to underſtand *Man*, a *Part* being put for the *Whole*; for ſo the *Scripture* doth very frequently call Man *Fleſh*, that being *one* of the Ingredients of his Nature. Thus *Pſ.*56.4. *I will not fear what fleſh can do unto me*: *Jerem.* 17. 5. *Curſed be the Man that maketh fleſh his arm*, that is, that puts his Confidence in Man: *Matth.* 24. 22. *Except thoſe days be ſhortned, no fleſh ſhall be ſaved*; that is, no Man: And *Rom.*3. 20. *No fleſh ſhall be juſtified in his ſight*, that is, no Man ſhall be juſtified. So here, *The Word was made fleſh*, that is, *The Word* was made Man. Not that the *Divine Nature* was converted into the Nature of Man, but the Meaning is,

it was made *one* with Man, even as our *Soul* is not turned into nor confounded with the *Body*; yet they *two*, though *diſtinct* in Natures, grow into one Man; ſo the *Manhood* of *Chriſt* was aſſumed, or taken into *The Word*, both being united into *one* Perſon, the Natures being preſerved *entire* and *diſtinct*, without any Mixture or Confuſion. For as the *Fourth General Council* hath defined it, *He was ſo made Fleſh that he ceaſed not to be the Word, never changing that he was, but aſſuming that which he was not.* And though our *Humanity* was advanced by it, yet his *Divinity* was not at all diminiſhed, and the Myſtery of Godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, was no Detriment to the *Godhead*, which is always *unchangeably* the ſame: And therefore the *ſeeming* Harſhneſs of this Expreſſion may be eaſily mollified by comparing it with others of the ſame import; for elſewhere it is ſaid, that *he was manifeſt in the fleſh*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. Which only denotes that the *Divinity* was made known, and did appear in the World in a *Humane Nature.* Elſewhere it is ſaid, that *he took on him the Nature of Man*, *Heb.* 2. 16. which only denotes that the *Divinity* did aſſume the *Humane Nature* to it, and was perſonally united with it. So here, *The Word was made fleſh*; that is, *The Word* was made

one

one with the Fleſh by aſſuming the *Humane Nature* into a *perſonal* Union with it ſelf.

Having thus explain'd to you the Senſe and Meaning of the Words, I ſhall now conclude this Argument with *three* or *four* ſhort Inferences from the whole.

1. From hence we may infer the *Eternal Divinity* of our *Bleſſed Saviour*, even from this *great* name *The Word*, that is here attributed to him. For ſince it is ſo apparent that this Phraſe is a *Term of Art* derived from the *Schools* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and ſince by it they did all ſo generally underſtand a *Divine Perſon* ſubſiſting from all *Eternity*, it muſt neceſſarily follow that the *Holy Ghoſt*, deriving it from them and applying it to our *Bleſſed Saviour*, muſt uſe it to the *ſame* Senſe; for otherwiſe He were better never to have uſed it at all, becauſe by diſcourſing in the *ſame* Language with them, he will give us *juſt* occaſion to think that he means the *ſame* thing, namely, that *Chriſt*, whom he calls *The Word*, is a *Divine* Perſon ſubſiſting from all *Eternity*; which if he doth not mean by uſing that Term, he will almoſt neceſſarily betray us into a *falſe* Belief concerning our *Saviour*. As, to inſtance briefly in a Caſe of another Nature; Our *Saviour* in his Sermons doth

frequently preſs us to *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, *Humilty* and *Charity*, all which are *Terms* frequently uſed long before in the *Moral Philoſophy* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by which they ſignify ſuch and ſuch *particular* Virtues. Since therefore our *Saviour* doth uſe the *ſame* Terms with them, we have *juſt* Reaſon to conclude that he means the *ſame* Virtues by them; and ſhould he mean any thing elſe, his very uſing of theſe Terms would neceſſarily impoſe upon us a *falſe* Senſe of his meaning; for how ſhould we underſtand his Meaning but by his Words, and how ſhould we underſtand his Words but by the *common* Import and Signification of them? And can we imagine that the *Spirit of Truth* would have ever deſcribed our *Saviour* by a *Term* that was ſo generally uſed to ſignify a *Divine Perſon* ſubſiſting from all *Eternity*, and uſed it *too*, as he doth, without any Reſtraint or Limitation, nay and ſo ſeemingly at leaſt to the *ſame* Purpoſe, as he doth in the *three firſt Verſes* of this Chapter, where he deſcribes the *Divine Nature* and *Operations* of *Chriſt The Word*, in the ſame terms in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to deſcribe the *Divinity* of their λογος; can we imagine, I ſay, that the *Holy Spirit* would have done thus, had he known *Chriſt* to be nothing but a *meer* Man that never was before

before he was born of his Mother? Far be it from us to charge that *Bleſſed Spirit* with impoſing ſuch a Deluſion upon Mankind.

2. Hence I infer the *aſtoniſhing* Love of our *Bleſſed Saviour* in condeſcending ſo low as to be made *Fleſh* for us, and aſſume our Nature. For what he was before he took our Nature, you have heard already: He was no *leſs* than the *Eternal Word of the Father*; in whoſe Boſom he enjoyed the *ſupremeſt* Degree of Bliſs and Happineſs, being crowned with Glory, and incircled about with the *Eſſential* Rays of the *Divinity*. And yet ſuch was his Love to *poor* Mortals, ſo *infinite* was his Zeal and Concern for our Happineſs, that, ſeeing the Miſery we were plunged into, he could not reſt, no not in the *bleſſed* Arms of his Father, but ſtript himſelf of all his Majeſty and Bliſs, and comes down among us, and aſſumes our Nature to ſave and reſcue us, and invite and lead us to thoſe *Heavenly* Manſions from whence he deſcended to us. Lord, what a *Prodigy* of Love was here, as doth not only *puzzle* my Conceit, but *out-reach* my Wonder and Admiration! For when I ſeriouſly conſider it, though it be a Bleſſing beyond all my Hopes, and ſuch as I could never have had the Impudence to deſire; yet it fills my Mind with an *awful* Horror

to

to think that there was a Time when the *great* God was here upon the Earth in my Form and Nature, and converſed familiarly with ſuch *mortal* Wights as my ſelf, and for my ſake, and ſuch *poor* Worms as I, patiently under-went the *common* Infirmities of Men, and willingly expoſed himſelf to the Contempt and Scorn of a *malevolent* World, and the Malice and Cruelty of thoſe *barbarous* Men to whom he gave Being, and could with the Breath of his Noſtrils have ſcattered into *Atoms*, and all this in *meer* Compaſſion to a Company of *apoſtatized* Natures, who had ſo highly deſerved to be thrown from his Care and Mercy *for ever*. O my Soul, how am I aſtoniſhed at this *Miracle* of Love! Methinks when I conſider it I am looking down from a *ſtupendous* Precipice, whoſe Height fills me with a *trembling* Horror, and even over-ſetting Reaſon.

3. From hence I infer what *mighty* Obligations we have *for ever* to love and ſerve our *Bleſſed Redeemer*. If our Hearts are capable of being warmed into *any* degree of Affection, ſure 'tis impoſſible but we muſt be affected at ſuch an *unheard* of Inſtance of Love. For the *Son of God* to leave his Father's Boſom, where he was infinitely more *happy* than we can expreſs and think of, and diſ-

diſguiſe himſelf in *mortal* Fleſh, and become a *Man of Sorrows* that he might make me a Man of *endleſs* Joys; can my Heart hold when I think of this? Is it poſſible I ſhould reflect upon ſuch a *prodigious* Inſtance of Affection without being wrapt into an *Extaſy* of Love? *Bleſſed Jeſus*, what *barbarous* Hearts do we carry about with us, that will not melt before the Flames of thy Love! Flames that are ſufficient to kindle *Seraphims*, and to fill all *reaſonable* Breaſts with *burning* Affections towards thee! For how is it poſſible that any *Man*, I had almoſt ſaid that any *Devil*, ſhould be ſo *diſingenuous* and *ill-natured* as not to be affected with ſuch *ſtupendous* Kindneſs? When we ſee a Child ſlight his *careful* and *indulgent* Parents, we are ready to account him an *unnatural* Monſter; when we ſee a Man neglect his Friend, or diſregard his Benefactor, we preſently call him *baſe* and *ungrateful*; nay when we ſee one abuſe a *poor brute* Creature that fawns upon him, and expreſſes its Kindneſs to him, we look upon it as an *undoubted* Sign of a very *hard* Heart, and an *ill* Nature: What Term then can we find in all *the World of Words* that is *odious* enough to expreſs our Diſaffection to our *Bleſſed Redeemer*, to whom we are ſo infinitely obliged? *Baſe*, *Diſingenuous*, *Ill-natured*,

tured, and *Ungrateful*, are all *too* ſoft; 'tis ſomething beyond *Barbarous* and *Deviliſh*. For one would think that neither the moſt *inhumane Canibal* on *Earth*, nor the *blackeſt Devil* in *Hell*, could ever be guilty of ſo *foul* a Crime, which hath ſomething in it *too monſtrous* for any Words to expreſs. Well therefore may the *Heavens* be aſtoniſhed, and the *Earth* tremble, and all the Creation of *God* ſtand amazed at us, to ſee how *inſenſible* we are of this moſt *raviſhing* and *endearing* Love. Well may we be amazed at our ſelves, and wonder at *our own* Stupidity to think that the *Son of God* ſhould be ſo *kind* as to come down from *Heaven* to viſit us, to leave the Habitation of his Glory, and ſhroud his *Divinity* in *mortal* Fleſh, and make himſelf a *miſerable* Wight, meerly that he might make us *happy*, and advance us to that Glory and Bliſs which for our ſakes he willingly abandoned; and yet that we are no more touched and affected with it, than with the moſt *indifferent* Thing in the World. *Bleſſed God*, what are we made of? What kind of Souls do we carry about with us, that no Kindneſs will oblige us, no not the moſt *endearing* that ever was known or heard of? Doubtleſs ſhould any Man have ſhewn us but half this Kindneſs, ſhould a *Friend* but offer to die for us, or a

Prince

Prince to deſcend from his Throne, and put himſelf into the State of a *Beggar* to inrich and advance us in the World, we ſhould have thought our ſelves bound to him as long as we lived; and ſhould we have thought any Services *too* much, any Requitals *too dear* for him, we ſhould have been lookt upon as *Monſters* of Ingratitude, as the Reproaches and Scandals of *humane* Nature, and been hiſs'd out of all Society for a Company of *infamous* Villains, *unworthy* of the *leaſt* Reſpect or Favour from Mankind. But for a *Friend* to die, or a *Prince* to become a *Beggar* for our ſakes, alas what *poor inconſiderable* Things are they, compared with the Condeſcentions of the *Son of God*, who humbled himſelf much *lower* in becoming a Man than the moſt *glorious* Angel in *Heaven* could have done in aſſuming the Nature of a Worm. And can we be ſo *inhumane* as not to be moved by ſuch a Miracle of *condeſcending* Love? Is it the *leſs*, becauſe it is the Love of *God*, or doth it *leſs* deſerve our Requital? What Excuſe then can we make for our *wretched* Inſenſibility? *O ungrateful* that we are! with what Confidence can we ſhew our Heads among *reaſonable* Beings after we have ſo barbarouſly ſlighted our *beſt* Friend, and behaved our ſelves ſo diſingenuouſly towards our *greateſt* Bene-

Benefactor? How can we pretend to any thing that is *modeſt* or *ingenuous*, *tender* or *apprehenſive* in *humane* Nature, when nothing will oblige us, no not that *aſtoniſhing* Love that made the *Son of God* leave all his Glory, and become a *poor miſerable* Mortal for our ſakes? *O bleſſed Jeſus!* what do thy *holy Angels* think of us! how do thy *bleſſed Saints* reſent our Unkindneſs towards thee! yea, how juſtly will the *Devils* themſelves reproach and upbraid our Baſeneſs, who, *bad* as they are, were never ſo much Devils yet as to ſpurn the Love of a Redeemer coming down from *Heaven* to die and ſuffer for their ſakes! Wherefore as we would not be hiſs'd at by all the *reaſonable* World, and become Spectacles of Horror to *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, let us endeavour to affect our ſelves with the Love of our *Redeemer*, and to inflame *our own* Souls with the Senſe of his Kindneſs, who hath done ſuch *mighty* things to endear and oblige us.

4. From hence I infer what *monſtrous* Diſingenuity it would be in us to think much of *parting* with any thing, or *doing* any thing for the ſake of *Chriſt*, who for our ſakes parted with his Father's Boſom, and all thoſe *infinite* Delights which he there enjoyed, and united himſelf to our *miſerable* Nature that he might make us *good* and

happy

happy for ever. And now after all this, with what Conſcience or Modeſty can we grudge to do any thing which he ſhall require at our hands? Should he command me to deſcend into the *loweſt* Form of Beings, and to become the moſt *wretched* and *contemptible* of all Animals, could I be ſuch a *Caitif* as to deny him, who deſcended much *lower* for the ſake of me? Should he remand me back into *Non-entity*, and bid me ceaſe to be *for ever*; alas! the Diſtance is nothing ſo *great* between *me* and *nothing*, as 'twas betwixt *him*, and that *humane Nature* which he aſſumed for my ſake. Should he require me to die for him under all thoſe *lingering* and *exquiſite* Tortures which the *bleſſed Martyrs* ſuffered for his Name, what Proportion were there between what he requires of me, and what he hath done for me? He only requires that I ſhould paſs through *Death* to *Heaven* for him, but he came from *Heaven* to paſs through *Death* for me; ſo that for his ſake I ſhould only put *off* a *wretched* Garment of Fleſh, that I may be inrobed with Glory and Immortality; but for my ſake he put *off* his Robes of Glory and Majeſty, that he might wear my *frail* and *mortal* Fleſh, and therein reconcile me to *God*, and make me everlaſtingly *happy*: And when I may advance my ſelf into an Equality

lity with *Angels* by ſuffering the Agonies of a *miſerable* Death for him, ſhall I refuſe, or think much of it; when he who was *equal with God* in Glory and Happineſs, was ſo ready to be born a *wretched miſerable* Man for me? Should he require me to give my Subſtance to the *Poor*, and leave my ſelf *deſtitute* of all Supplies and Comforts; could I deny ſo *poor* a Requeſt to *him*, who forſook a *Heaven* of *infinite* Pleaſures for my ſake, and expoſed himſelf *naked* to the Mercy of a *wretched*, *wicked*, and *ill-natured* World, from whom he could expect nothing but the moſt *barbarous* Contempt and Cruelty? Sure, one would think 'twere impoſſible for any *reaſonable* Being to deny ſuch *poor*, ſuch *inconſiderable Boons* to ſuch a *great* and *deſerving* Benefactor; and yet theſe are much more than what he ordinarily requires at our hands. For that which he ordinarily requires of us is, that we would forſake thoſe *Vices* which are as *injurious* to *us* as they are *hateful* to *him*, and which are therefore *hateful* to him, becauſe they are our Enemies; and that we would practiſe thoſe *Virtues* in which the Perfection and Happineſs of our Nature is involved, and which we can no more be *happy* without, than we can *be* without Being. And can I think much to part with thoſe Luſts for

for his ſake, which are my Shames and Infelicities, who never grudg'd to part with *Heaven* for *mine?* Can they be as *dear* to me as his Father's Boſom was to him? and yet he left *that* for Love of *me*; and ſhall not I leave *theſe* for Love of him? Methinks if we will not part with them for *our own* ſakes, as being *deſtructive* to our Peace and Happineſs; yet had we the *leaſt* ſpark of Ingenuity in us, we ſhould gladly part with them for the ſake of our *Saviour*, who for *ours* was ſo ready to part with all that was *dear* to him. Can we be ſuch Wretches as to refuſe to ſerve him, when he requires nothing of us but what we are obliged to by *our own* Intereſt? Are we ſo *loſt* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modeſt*, that we will not obey *him* when he only requires us to be kind to *our ſelves? O wretched* Mortals! doth his Coming down from *Heaven* to ſave you, deſerve this *barbarous* Treatment at your hands, that to ſpite *him* you ſhould injure *your ſelves*, and wound his Authority thro' *your own* Sides? Had he been wholly *indifferent* to you, it had been very *unreaſonable* to reject his Service when it altogether conſiſts in ſerving your ſelves; but to diſobey ſo *dear* a Friend, to whom we are obliged by ſuch *ſtupendous* Favours, when he en-

joins us nothing but the Means of *our own* Happineſs, is ſuch a Piece of *monſtrous* and *unnatural* Baſeneſs, as the *Devil* himſelf can hardly parallel. *O unkind* that we are! that we will not be *good* to our ſelves for our Saviour's ſake, and that when he conjures us to it, as he doth, even by all the Love that we owe him! For ſo *John* 14. 15. *If ye love me*, ſaith he, *keep my Commandments*; *Conſider what mighty things I have done for you*; *how I left my Throne in Heaven for your ſakes, and became a miſerable mortal Man: And now that I am going from you, and am offering up my Life to redeem you, if ever I have merited any Love at your hands, expreſs it in keeping my Commandments. 'Tis no great matter that I require of you, 'tis only that you would be kind to your ſelves, that you would let Miſery alone, and endeavour to be as happy as Heaven can make you. This is all the Requital that I expect at your hands, that you would be as good and happy as I would have you; and this, which is the ſum of all my Commands, I conjure you ſtrictly to obſerve, even by all the Love that you owe me. O bleſſed Jeſus!* one would have thought thou hadſt been requiring ſome *mighty* Trial of our Love to thee, that we ſhould do ſome *great* Thing for thee to which nothing could prompt us but

but only our Gratitude and Kindneſs: But when thou only requireſt us to expreſs our Love to *thee* in doing that which is the *higheſt* Expreſſion of our Love to *our ſelves*, can we be ſo *diſingenuous* as not to do that for *thy* ſake to whom we are ſo infinitely obliged, which we are bound to do for *our own* ſakes as well as thine?

5. And laſtly; Hence I infer what a *glorious* Thing it is to do *Good*, ſince the *Son of God*, having ſo *great* an Opportunity of doing *Good* to the World, thought it worth his While to come down from *Heaven*, and aſſume our Natures, and undergo our Miſeries, as if he eſteemed it more *glorious* and *becoming* the Majeſty and Divinity of his Perſon to dwell upon Earth with *poor miſerable* Mortals, among whom he might do the *greateſt Good*, than to ſit *above* upon the Throne of *Heaven*, and receive the moſt *humble* Adorations of *Angels*; for 'twas only for an Opportunity of doing the *greateſt Good* that he exchanged the Glory and Happineſs of *Heaven*, chuſing rather to become a *miſerable* Man to make others *good* and *happy*, than to continue among thoſe *infinite* Delights with which the *Heavenly State* abounds. What a moſt *glorious* Thing then is it to do *Good*, when our moſt *wiſe Re-*

deemer choſe it before *Heaven* it ſelf, when he thought it more *eligible* to come down upon Earth and make us *happy*, than to dwell in the Boſom of his Father, and ſhine in *Heaven* with the Brightneſs and Glory of his Divinity. And if there be nothing in *Heaven* ſo *glorious* as doing *Good*, what is there upon *Earth* that may be compared unto it? What *dim*, what *ſullied* Things are all the *Pomps* and *Splendors* of this World compared with the Glory of doing *Good* to *others*, when *God* preferred it before *Heaven* it ſelf? To conquer Kingdoms, to lead the World in Triumph after us, how *mean* and *inconſiderable* are they compared with that Glory which the *Son of God* forſook meerly to do *Good* to the World? A Thing which he eſteemed ſo *great* and *illuſtrious*, that he did not only leave *Heaven* for it, but ſcorned and deſpiſed the Kingdoms of the *Earth*, finding nothing *below* that was *worthy* of him but only to go about doing *Good!* For this was his *conſtant* Imployment, as you may ſee *Acts* 10. 21. And now is it *poſſible* that after this *great* Example, we ſhould think Beneficence a *cheap* or *vulgar* Thing? Can we think it a Diſhonour to ſtoop to the *meaneſt* Offices, whereby we may ſerve the *Souls* or *Bodies* of

of our Brethren, when the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven*, and vailed his Glory in *mortal* Fleſh for no *other* End but to do Good? *O fooliſh* Creatures that we are! did we but underſtand and conſider what a *magnificent* Thing it is to ſupply the Neceſſities of Men, and contribute to their Happineſs, we ſhould doubtleſs embrace it as our *greateſt* Preferment, and think our ſelves bound to bleſs God *for ever* for furniſhing us with Occaſions of doing *Good*, that he doth deem us *worthy* of ſuch an *illuſtrious* Imployment, to have ſome ſhare with himſelf in the Glory of it, that he will vouchſafe to us an Opportunity to *honour* and *magnify* our ſelves by acting this *Divine*, this *Godlike* Part in the World. Never then let us think that we diſhonour our ſelves, though we ſtoop *never* ſo low, when it is to do *Good*; no, though it be to *viſit* a Beggar, to *dreſs* the Sores of a *poor Lazar*, to *inſtruct* or *comfort* the *meaneſt* Wretch in all thy Neighbourhood. For now thou acteſt the Part of *God* in doing the moſt *glorious* Thing in all the World; a Thing for which the *greateſt* Princes may envy thee, and the *bleſſed God* for ever applaud thee! Now thou art doing that which the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven* to

do, and which he thought more *worthy* of his Choice than to reign over *Angels* in *Heaven*: So that either we muſt ſay, that He was *unwiſe* for preferring it before *Heaven*, or elſe we muſt acknowledge that we are infinitely *fooliſh* in preferring any Thing in the World before it.

II. I now proceed to the *Second* Propoſition, *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.* For that theſe *later* Words [*full of Grace and Truth*] belong to the *former*, [And dwelt among us] you may plainly ſee by the *Parentheſis* in your Bible, by which they are interrupted and broken off from one another. In the Explication of theſe Words, I ſhall do theſe *Two* Things:

1. Enquire what is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us.*
2. What we are to underſtand by his being *full of Grace and Truth.*

1. What is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us?* In the *Greek* it is ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν; that is, he pitched his Tabernacle among us; which ſeems plainly to refer to God's dwelling in the Tabernacle under

under the *Moſaic Law*. For the *Greek* word σκηνόω comes immediately from the *Hebrew* *Shacan*, and differs from it only by the *Greek* Termination; and from *Shacan* comes the word *Shechinah*, by which the *Hebrews* were wont to expreſs God's *glorious* Preſence upon Earth, and eſpecially his Habitation in the *holy Tabernacle* between the *two Cherubims*, where he is ſaid to dwell, 1 *Sam.* 4. 4. and 2 *Sam.* 6. 2. becauſe from thence *God* was wont to ſpeak, and diſcover himſelf by a *viſible* Brightneſs and Glory: And accordingly this Preſence, or Habitation of *God*, is called in the *Greek* δόξα and ἐπιφάνεια, *Glory* and *Appearing*. Thus *Numb.* 16. 19. it is ſaid, that when the *Congregation* drew near to the Tabernacle, the *Glory of the Lord appeared* unto them; and, *v.* 42. it is ſaid, that *a Cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the Glory of the Lord appeared.* So when *the Glory is ſaid to be departed from Iſrael*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 21. it's plain that by that *Glory* is meant this *viſible* Appearance of *God* in a *glorious* Brightneſs from between the Cherubims. So, *Rev.* 21. when it had been ſaid of the *New Jeruſalem*, that it was σκηνὴ, *the Tabernacle of God with us*, *v.* 3. that being repeated again, *v.* 11. is ſaid to *have the Glory of God* in it, and the *Glory of God* to enlighten it, *v.* 23. Now it ſeems

moſt probable that this glorious *Shechinah*, Preſence, or Habitation of *God*, conſiſted in the Preſence of Angels; who being the *Courtiers* of *Heaven*, where they appear there *God* is ſaid to be peculiarly preſent. And hence it is that the Well *Lahi-roi*, where the *Angel* appeared to *Hagar*, *Gen.* 16. 7, 14. is by the *Jeruſalem Targum*, ſtiled the Well *ubi manifeſtata illi fuit Præſentia Domini Majeſtatica*, *where the Preſence of God in Majeſty was manifeſted to her*: And that *viſible Glory* which appeared from between the Cherubims, is called by the ſame name, *viz.* the *Gloria Majeſtaticæ præſentiæ Domini*, *the Glory of the Majeſtatick Preſence of God*; which is a *plain* Evidence that the *Jews* believed the *Majeſtatick* Preſence of *God* to be nothing elſe but the Appearance of Angels. And of the ſame Mind was the *Author to the Hebrews*, *Heb.* 2. 2. *For the Law*, ſaith he, *was ſpoken by Angels*; and ſo St. *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 53. *The Law was received by the Diſpoſition of Angels*; and St. *Paul*, that *the Law was ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator*, *Galat.* 3. 19. Whereas *Exod.* 19. 11. comp. with 20. *v.* 22. it is ſaid, that *the Lord came down in the ſight of all the People, and talked with them*; that is, as you will there find, he ſpoke the Law to them. Which is a plain Evidence that that *glorious* Deſcent

cent of God's Preſence upon *Mount Sinai*, where the Law was ſpoken, was in the Opinion of the *Author to the Hebrews*, nothing but the Preſence of Angels; who when they were to repreſent the *Divine Preſence*, were wont to appear in *bright* and *radiant* Bodies; and therefore where it is ſaid in *Iſaiah*'s Viſion, *Iſ.* 6. 1. that *he ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a Throne*, and that *his Train filled the Temple*; that is, his Train of Angels; and this Train of Angels our *Saviour* calls *the Glory of the Lord*, *Joh.* 12. 41. which is the ſame with the *Shechinah*, or *Majeſtick Preſence*: And therefore perhaps they are called *Angels of Light* in reference to that *lucid*, *ſhining*, *flaming* Appearance which they were wont to make: And in *Pſ.* 104. 4. *God* is ſaid *to make his Miniſters a flaming fire*, that is, when they are to make a viſible Repreſentation of his *Majeſtick Preſence* to Mankind. But beſides this, *Iſa.* 63. 9. you have mention made of *the Angel of God's Preſence which ſaved Iſrael*; which ſeems to denote the *Head* and *Chief* of thoſe Angels, which by their *glorious* Appearances did repreſent *God* to Mankind. By which Angel the *Jews* did generally underſtand the *Meſſias*, or *Eternal Word*: For ſo *Philo*, [1] ſpeaking of God's committing the Care of his

[1] De Agricul. p. 152.

Flock

Flock to his *firſt-born* Son, *The Word*, tells us, *That this is that Angel whom God promiſed to ſend before the Camp of Iſrael, even the Angel of his Preſence.* And ſo alſo Rab. *Menahem* upon the 14th of *Exod.* 19. tells us, that *the Angel which went before the Camp of Iſrael was Shechinah the Preſence, or Majeſty of God, and that he is called the Angel or Prince of the World, becauſe the Government of the World is in his hands.* And to the ſame Purpoſe *Moſes* the Son of *Neheman*, *Præterea Scriptum eſt*, ſaith he, *& Angelus faciei ejus ſalvos fecit ipſos*, &c. that is, *It is* written, *the Angel of his Preſence ſhall ſave them, viz.* that Angel which is the Preſence of God, of whom it is ſaid, *My Preſence ſhall go before thee, and I will cauſe thee to reſt. Moreover*, ſaith he, *this is that Angel of whom the Prophets foretold, The Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple, the Angel of the Covenant whom ye deſire*; which both the Ancient *Jews* and *Chriſtians* interpret to be the *Meſſias*; and *this*, ſaith he, *is He who governs the World, that brought the Children of Iſrael out of Egypt, and to whom the moſt High God communicates his own Name.* And this without doubt was he whom *God* calls *his Preſence* when he promiſed *Moſes*, that *his Preſence ſhould go along with him*, *Exod.* 33. 14. for this *Preſence* is there ſaid to be the

the *Angel of God*; both which put together make him to be the Angel of God's Preſence, *Exod.* 23. 20. And accordingly inſtead of, *Say not before the Angel of the Lord*, *Eccleſ.* 5. 6. the *Septugiant* render it, *Say not before the Preſence of God*, that is, before the *Angel of his Preſence*. And ſince to this *Angel of his Preſence*, God doth attribute not only his Prerogative of Forgiving Sins, but alſo *his own* Name, as you may ſee he doth, *Exod.* 23. 21. it ſeems very probable, what not only the *Jews*, but many very *Learned Chriſtians* do aſſert, that it was no *created* Angel, but the *Eternal Word* or *Meſſias*: For ſaith *God* to *Moſes*, *Behold I ſend an Angel before thee*, &c. *beware of him, and obey his Voice*; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Tranſgreſſions, for my Name is in him*; that is, my Name *Jehovah*, which is the *proper* and *incommunicable* Name of *God*. And accordingly you frequently read of an Angel that is called by the Name *Jehovah*, which I doubt not was the ſame with this *Angel of God's Preſence*. Thus that Angel of the Lord which appeared to *Moſes* in the *burning Buſh*, is called by the Name *Jehovah*, and ſtiled *the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, *Exod.* 3. 2. comp. 4. 5. And one of thoſe Angels that appeared to *Abraham* in the *Plains of Mamre*, is called the *Lord*, and

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the Judge of all the Earth, *Gen.* 18. 1. 25. So alſo he that ſtood on the top of the Ladder in *Jacob*'s Viſion, is in *Gen.* 28. 13. called *the Lord God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac*; whereas in *Gen.* 31. 11. he is called *the Angel of the Lord*, and afterwards, *v.* 13. *the God of Bethel*. Which ſeems to me a plain Evidence that that *Angel* of God was *God*, ſince both thoſe Titles were attributed to the *ſame* Perſon; and that he was alſo that very Angel of *his Preſence* whom *God* promiſed to ſend before the *Camp of Iſrael*, ſince in him it is apparent the Name of *God* was, *i. e.* the Name *Jehovah*. And it's very obſervable, that this very Angel both *Philo* and the *Chaldee Paraphraſe* ſtiles the *Word of God*; and therefore thoſe Words of God to *Joſhua*, *Joſ.* 1. 5. *As I was with Moſes, ſo I will be with thee*, the *Paraphraſe* renders thus, *As my Word was aſſiſting to Moſes, ſo it ſhall be aſſiſting to thee*: And 'tis the Obſervation of the *Learned Maſius*, that generally where the *Hebrew Text* ſpeaks of God either converſing with Men, or managing their Affairs, that *Paraphraſe*, inſtead of God, uſes this Phraſe *the Word of God*. From whence it is evident, that it was the *received* Doctrine of the *Jews* that *God* was always preſent with Mankind by his *Eternal Word*; which is therefore the more conſiderable,

ſiderable, becauſe it ſo exactly agrees with the Doctrine of the *Primitive Fathers*. For ſo *Tertullian*, *Chriſtus ſemper egit in Dei Patris nomine*; *ipſe ab initio converſatus eſt cum Patriarchis & Prophetis*. And in his Book againſt *Praxian* he tells us, *That from* Adam *to the Patriarchs and Prophets, Chriſt always deſcended to diſcourſe with Men*; and *that that God who converſed upon Earth with Men, was no other than that Eternal Word that was to be made Fleſh*. And the ſame Thing is ſtrenuouſly aſſerted alſo by *Juſtin Martyr* in his Diſcourſes with *Trypho the Jew*. Nor can I ſee any Reaſon why he ſhould not be the *Angel of God's Preſence*, ſince elſewhere he is expreſly called the *Angel* of that Covenant by which *God* hath oblig'd himſelf to be preſent with his *Church* for ever, *Mal.* 3. 1. And the *New Teſtament* ſo *often* declares him to be the *Image*, and *Character*, and *Repreſentative* of God; and *himſelf* tells *Philip* that he did ſo perfectly repreſent the Father, that *whoſoever had ſeen him had ſeen the Father*, *Joh.* 14. 9. And if this be ſo, as it ſeems highly probable, that *The Word* was *the Angel of God's Preſence*, that is, the *Chief* or *Prince* of thoſe Angels that repreſented *God* in the World, then it will follow that the *Shechinah*, or *Majeſtick Preſence* of God, conſiſted in a *glorious* and *viſible* Appearance of

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the Word with a Troop of *bleſſed* Angels attending him in *bright* and *luminous* Forms And this I conceive was the *glorious Preſence* of God which came down *firſt* upon *Mount Sinai*, and *afterwards* removed into the Tabernacle, and abode between the *two* Cherubims. And this I am rather induced to believe, becauſe I find the Deſcent of God's Preſence upon *Mount Sinai*, is deſcribed in the *ſame* manner as Chriſt's coming to Judgment; for ſo, *Matth.* 16. 27. it is ſaid, that *he ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels*; and St. *Jude* tells us, that *he ſhall come with his holy Myriads, or Ten Thouſands*, *v.* 14. for ſo it ought to be render'd: And the Lord in the ſame manner is ſaid to come from *Sinai with his holy Ten Thouſands, or Myriads*; for ſo it is in the *Hebrew*, *Deut.* 33. 2. And ſince they are both deſcribed in the *ſame* manner, it ſeems to follow, that they were both the *ſame Majeſtick Preſence* of God, even the *Eternal Word* aſſuming a *glorious* Form, and attended with *Myriads* of *bright* and *ſhining* Angels. And this ſame *Preſence* it was that was afterwards diſplayed in the Tabernacle, which was ſaid to be filled with the *Glory of the Lord*, which ſhone from between the Cherubims with a *bright* and *viſible* Splendour, that is, with the *illuſtrious* Appearances of the *Eternal Word*, and

and thoſe *glorious* Angels that attended him. And upon *that* Mount, and in *that* Tabernacle, did this *bleſſed Word* repreſent his Father, even as the *Vice-Roy* doth the *Sovereign* Prince; for there in his Father's Perſon, and by his Authority, he gave forth his Laws and Oracles to the Seed of *Abraham*, and as the Vice-gerent of the moſt *High God* governed the Houſe of *Iſrael*, and diſtributed to them *Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, according as they behaved themſelves towards him: For upon all the *fore-named* Reaſons it ſeems highly probable, that he was the Lord who ſpoke to *Moſes*, and from between the Cherubims, and that thence delivered the Law to him. So that as he was the *Shechinah*, or *glorious Preſence* of the moſt *High God* in the Tabernacle, he did there repreſent his Perſon by bearing his Authority, and ruling the Houſe of *Iſrael* as his *Subſtitute* and *Vice-Roy*.

And that the Words of my Text do refer to this *glorious* Appearance of *the Word* in the Tabernacle, and to his repreſenting of the moſt *High God* there, is very evident, in that it is not only ſaid that he tabernacled among them, which evidently alludes to his dwelling in the *old* Tabernacle, but that they ſaw *his Glory* too, which is a *plain* Alluſion to that Glory of his which filled the Tabernacle. So that the Meaning of theſe Words,

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He dwelt among us, seems to be this, that as *Christ* who is the *Eternal Word*, was the *Shechinah, the Divine Presence*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, which in the Tabernacle of *old* represented the most *High* to the *Jews*; so he also abode or tabernacled in our Flesh as the *Representative* of his Father to Mankind. In the Tabernacle of our Flesh he displayed the Glory of his Father to us; he openly manifested and represented him to the World, even as of *old* he was wont to do in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For, for *The Word* to Tabernacle among us must necessarily signify more than barely to dwell or live among us; for it must signify to dwell as the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, that is, as the most *glorious* Presence or Representative of the most *High God*, as one that was vested with the *Divine* Authority, and that was the *Vice-gerent* of the Father of all things. So that, *He dwelt among us*, seems to signify the same with, He reigned among us in his Father's stead, as one who bore his Authority, and represented his Person, and to whom for the future we were to pay the *same* Homage and Reverence that we were bound to render to the most *High* himself, who under *himself* hath authorized him to be our Prince and Governour to declare his Divine Will to us, and exact our Obedience thereunto by *rewarding*

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and *puniſhing* us according to the Tenour of thoſe Laws which he hath eſtabliſhed in his *bleſſed Goſpel*; for this is plainly implied in his *Shechanizing* or *Tabernacling*, *viz.* his being the *glorious* Repreſentative of *God* in the World. He tabernacled among us, that is, he acted in God's ſtead, as one that repreſented his Father; and this he did in our Fleſh in a far more *glorious* manner than ever he did in the *Moſaic Tabernacle*: For in our Fleſh and Nature he tabernacled *full of Grace and Truth*; which brings me to the next Enquiry, *viz.*

2. What is here meant by his *dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth?* By theſe *two* Phraſes the Deſign of the *holy Penman* is doubtleſs to diſtinguiſh the Manner of his dwelling among *us* from that of his dwelling among the *Jews* in the Tabernacle: For a little after he uſes the *ſame* Phraſes in Contradiſtinction to the Law of *Moſes*: *The Law*, ſaith he, *was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth by Jeſus Chriſt*, *v.* 17. *God the Eternal Word* gave the Law to *Moſes*, and *Moſes* gave it to the People of *Iſrael*; but *Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, the *Eternal Word incarnate*, gave not the Law, but *Grace and Truth*. So in the Text, *The Word incarnate*, or tabernacled in our Fleſh, did *Shechanize*, or perform the Part of his Father's *ſupreme*

Repreſentative among us *full of Grace and Truth*; which implies ſomething beyond what he did when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and there as the *Vice-Roy* of *God* reigned over the *Houſe of Jacob*. That I may therefore more fully explain this Matter to you, I will briefly conſider theſe *two* Phraſes *apart*, and ſhew you in what Particulars they each of them diſtinguiſh his dwelling among *us* from his dwelling in the *Moſaick Tabernacle*.

1. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, which diſtinguiſhes his dwelling among *us* from that more *ſevere* and *rigorous* manner in the *former* Tabernacle; and that in theſe following Particulars:

1*ſt*. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in reſpect of the *Sweetneſs* and *Obligingneſs* of his Behaviour, in Contradiſtinction to that more *dreadful* and *terrible* manner of his converſing with the *Jews*, when he tabernacled among them. The *Jews* being a moſt *ſtubborn* and *ſtif-necked* Generation, (as they are often called in the *Old Teſtament*) the *Eternal Word* thought fit to converſe among them in ſuch a way as was moſt *ſuitable* to their *Genius* and Temper, to break their Stubbornneſs with the Dread of his Power, and awe them with the Terror of his Majeſty. And accordingly you find that

that when he came down firſt upon *Mount Sinai*, he was attended with a *loud ſounding* Trumpet, with *Thunders* and *Lightnings*, with *Fire* and *Smoak*, and all the Equipage of a moſt *dreadful* Majeſty, ſuch as cauſed the Mountain and the People to tremble, *Exod.* 19. 16, 20. And afterwards it is ſaid that the Glory in which he appeared, when the People ſaw him upon the Mount, was like a *devouring* Fire, in which *glorious* Appearance he afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and there abode between the *Cherubims*, *Exod.* 40. 34, 35. And when in all this *dreadful* Majeſty he appeared unto them, they are kept at a *great* Diſtance from him, and were ſeverely forbid to approach him, leſt he ſhould *break forth upon them, and deſtroy them*, *Exod.* 19. 24. And whenever they provoked him by their Murmurings and Rebellions, his Wrath broke forth like Lightning upon them, and conſumed the *ring-leading* Rebels, that by their Example the reſt might be warned to do no more wickedly. Thus in all his Converſes with them he clothed himſelf in a *formidable* Majeſty to break, and awe their *ſturdy* Spirits, and force their *ſtiff* Necks to yield to the Yoke of his *Sovereign* Authority. But when he aſſumed our Nature, and tabernacled among *us* in our Fleſh, he laid by that *aſto-*

niſhing Majeſty that was wont to render him ſo *dreadful* to the *Iſraelites*, and put on all the Condeſcentions and Sweetneſſes of a moſt *familiar* and *endearing* Converſation, and converſed among Men in ſuch a *generous*, *friendly*, and *courteous* Manner as was moſt *apt* to charm and inamour the World. He was *free* without being *vain* or *trifling*, *ſerious* without being *ſour* or *moroſe*; his Humour always *chearful* and *uniform*, and his Gravity was equally *diſtant* from Moroſeneſs and Vanity; and in a word, his Deportment was made up of all the Accompliſhments that can command either Love or Honour. And though now and then he falls into *high* Expreſſions of Indignation, yet 'twas only againſt thoſe *baſe* Fellows the *Phariſees*, who under a Pretence of being *Saints* and the *Godly Party*, were *bloted* up with Pride and Arrogance, and *canker'd* with Malice and *ill* Nature; for which they were ſo abominable in his Eyes, whoſe Temper was altogether ſo *loving* and *divine* that he could not mention them without calling them *Hypocrites, and the Children of the Devil.* And if to all this you add his *profound Humility* and *Condeſcention*, his *Meekneſs* under Reproaches, and his *Conſtancy* and *Patience* under the *greateſt* Sufferings, how much more *ſweet*, *grateful* and *charming*, was this

this than when he appeared in ſuch a *dreadful* and *aſtoniſhing* Majeſty upon *Mount Sinai*, and in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*? 'Tis true, the *Innocency* and *Purity* of his Life, the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, and the many *mighty* Miracles that he wrought, could not but imprint an *awful* Majeſty upon his Perſon; but yet 'twas a *graceful* Majeſty, a Majeſty *full* of Grace and Sweetneſs, and ſuch as was much more *apt* to *endear* than to *affright* Men! For, as for the *Virtue* of his Life, and the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, it could not but attract all thoſe who had any Love and Eſteem for Virtue and Goodneſs. And as for his Miracles, they were vaſtly *different* from thoſe which he wrought in the Wilderneſs, which had *little* elſe in them but Matter of Terror and Aſtoniſhment; but theſe were all ſuch as did expreſs his Kindneſs to the World, and ſo were much more apt to *oblige* than to *terrify* thoſe that beheld them: *For he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſs'd with the Devil, Acts* 10. 38. and *healing all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſes among the People, Matth.* 4. 23. So that in reſpect of the *Sweetneſs* and *Obligingneſs* of his Converſation, he tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in Contradiſtinction to that *terrible* Majeſty in which he tabernacled among the *Jews*.

2dly. He tabernacled among us *full of Grace* in regard of the *Sweetneſs* and *Gentleneſs* of his Laws, in Contradiſtinction to thoſe many *burthenſom* Precepts which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. It's apparent by the Hiſtory of that People that they were obſtinately addicted to the Cuſtoms of *Egypt*, from whence they were brought, and of the *Neighbouring* Nations round about them; and thence it was that notwithſtanding thoſe *manifeſt* Diſcoveries that God had made of himſelf to them, and of his being the only *true God*, ſuch as one would have thought had been *ſufficient* to have convinced the moſt *obſtinate* Gainſayers; yet *ever* and *anon* we find them ſtarting aſide to the *Idolatrous* Cuſtoms of the *Gentiles*, and revolting from that *God* who had ſo glorioufly manifeſted himſelf among them. The *Eternal Word* therefore, when he came to *tabernacle* among them, he gave them abundance of Laws, the Matter of which was in its *own* Nature perfectly *indifferent*, that by thoſe as by ſo many Bounds and Fences he might keep them from breaking out of God's Incloſure into the *wild Common* of *Gentiliſm*; and ſuch were the *greateſt* Part of their *Ceremonial Laws*, ſome of which were inſtituted in Compliance with the more *innocent* Rites of the

the *Heathen*, and *others* in oppoſition to thoſe which were purely *magical* and *idolatrous*. And hence it is that in the Law of their Ceremonies, there are ſo many things enjoined them of which we can give no *tolerable* Account, they being either *innocent* Cuſtoms derived from the *Heathens* in Compliance with the *Jews*, or Prohibitions of thoſe *magical* and *idolatrous* Cuſtoms in which the *Jews* had been educated in *Egypt*, and to which they were always very *prone* and *inclinable*. So that merely to comply with the *Jews* in what was *innocent*, and to reſtrain them in what was *hurtful* and *idolatrous*, the *Eternal Word* was fain to impoſe a *vaſt* number of *Poſitive Laws* upon them, which contained nothing but what was purely *indifferent*, and might have been done or undone without any Prejudice to the *Eternal* Rules of Goodneſs. And accordingly, *Ezek.* 20. 24, 25. it is ſaid, that *becauſe their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols, therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good*, that is, had no *intrinſick* Goodneſs in them; and *Judgments whereby they ſhould not live*. And that *God* impoſed theſe Things, not as *good* in themſelves, but as *accommodated* to the *preſent* State and Temper of the *Iſraelites*, is evident from what the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſ.* 51. 16. *Thou deſireſt not Sacrifice; thou delight-*

eſt not in Burnt-offerings; though it is evident he had a farther End in impoſing very many of theſe *ſacred* Rites, namely to ſhadow out by them the Myſteries of the *Goſpel*, and give them ſome *preludious* Hints of that *glorious* Kingdom of *Chriſt* that was afterwards to be eſtabliſhed in the World: But by this means the *Jewiſh* Law was multiplied into ſo many Precepts, and thoſe many of them ſo *expenſive* and *burthenſom*, that the *Apoſtle* calls it *a Yoke which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*, *Acts* 15. 10. and elſe where, *a Yoke of Bondage*, *Gal.* 5. 1. Thus while the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews*, his Laws were very *rigid* and *cumberſom*, being clogg'd with ſo *vaſt* a number of *poſitive* Rites and Obſervances: But when he came to tabernacle in our Fleſh, he aboliſhed all theſe *numerous* Ceremonies, and impoſed nothing upon the World but what is *ſweet*, and *eaſy*, and *full of Grace*. And hence himſelf tells us, *Matth.* 11. 30. ὁ ζυγὸς μου χρηστὸς, *My Yoke is gracious*, (for ſo it is in the *Greek*) *and my Burthen is light*; for it impoſes nothing upon us but what is moſt *agreeable* to our *rational* Natures, nothing but what we our ſelves, if we were *wiſe* and *good*, ſhould reckon our ſelves obliged to though he had never enjoined it. For all the Duty he requires of

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us reſults immediately from the Frame of our Natures, and the *unalterable* Relations we ſtand in to *God* and the World. For the Sum of all *Chriſtian* Duty is contained in thoſe *three* Generals, *to live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*; and theſe muſt neceſſarily oblige us ſo long as we carry *ſuch* Beings about us, and continue in *ſuch* Relations. Whilſt *God* is our God and Creator, we cannot be diſobliged from living *godly*, that is, from *honouring* and *loving* him, from *fearing* and *truſting* in him, from *ſerving* and *adoring* him; for unleſs we could deſtroy our Relation to him, and ceaſe to be his Creatures, the Dueneſs of theſe Acts of Homage and Worſhip from *us* to *him*, muſt neceſſarily abide *for ever*: Whilſt we continue to be *reaſonable* Animals we cannot be freed from the Obligation of *Sobriety*, which conſiſts in governing our Paſſions and Appetites by our Reaſon; for till we can lay by our Reaſon, which is the *ſuperiour* Principle of our Nature, and ſtep into *another* Form of Beings, it will be always fit that our *inferiour* Powers ſhould be ſubject to its Conduct and Government. Whilſt we continue in the *Society* of Men, and are Members of the Body of Mankind, we cannot be releaſed from the Tyes of *Righteouſneſs*, which contains in it *Charity*, and

and all other *ſociable Virtues*; and till we ceaſe to be related to Mankind, it can never ceaſe to be *reaſonable* for us to do what becomes our Relation, that is, to be *juſt*, *benign*, and *charitable* to *one another*. So that all that the *Word incarnate* hath enjoined us, is to do what we our ſelves muſt needs acknowledge is moſt *juſt* and *reaſonable*, and what we ſhould chooſe to do before any thing in the World, were we not prejudiced againſt it by our own *baſe* Luſts and *unreaſonable* Paſſions. So that in reſpect of thoſe *gracious* Laws he gave us whilſt he dwelt among us, he may well be ſaid to dwell among us *full of Grace*.

3*dly*. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in reſpect of that *full* Pardon and Remiſſion which he hath granted to Sinners in his *Goſpel*, in Contradiſtinction to that *partial* and *incompleat* Pardon which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. For whilſt the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Repreſentative reigned over the Nation of *Iſrael*, he gave no *other* Pardon but *temporal* by the Law of *Moſes*, which was the Rule and Inſtrument of his Government. And I'm ſure that from the 20th of *Exod.* to the 27th of *Deut.* in which compaſs that whole Law is comprized, there is not the *leaſt* mention of any *other* Pardon or Forgiveneſs allowed to Offen-

Offenders, but only what reſpects their *temporal* Puniſhment; nay in *ſome* Caſes this was not allowed, as particularly in the Caſes of *Blaſphemy*, *Idolatry*, and *Murther*, no not though they heartily repented of it. For all that Pardon which the *Moſaick* Law allowed, was indulged to them upon their offering up *Propitiatory Sacrifices*, which in theſe *exempted* Caſes were not allowed of; but yet the *Apoſtle* tells us of all theſe Sacrifices in general, that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could not take away Sin*, *Heb.*10.4. that *they did ſanctify only to the purifying of the fleſh*, *Heb.*7.13. that *they could not make him that did the Service perfect*, *as pertaining to the Conſcience*, *Heb.* 9.9. that is, that they only releaſed Offenders from the Obligation to *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Puniſhments, but could by no means free them from the *eternal* Puniſhments of the *other* Life. Not that I make the *leaſt* Doubt but that truly *penitent* Offenders were forgiven the *eternal* Puniſhment *then* as well as *now*, and forgiven *too* for the ſake of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Lamb that was intentionally ſlain from the Beginning of the World; but by what hath been ſaid it's plain they were not forgiven by Virtue of that Law whereby the *Eternal Word* reigned over the Houſe of *Iſrael*, but rather by Virtue of that *Goſpel* which was

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firſt preached to *Adam*, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs*; wherein *Chriſt* the *Seed of the Woman*, and *the Seed of Abraham*, is promiſed, in whom all Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed. 'Tis true, the Sacrifices of the *Law* were *typical* of the Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, and ſo conſequently was that *temporal* Pardon obtained by them *typical* of that *eternal* Pardon which we do obtain by the *great* Propitiation of our *Saviour*; for ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us, that *the Law had in it a ſhadow of good things to come*, *Heb.* 10. 1. But we muſt not imagine that *eternal* Remiſſion, which is the Effect of *Chriſt's real* Sacrifice, could ever be obtained by thoſe Sacrifices which were only the Shadows and Reſemblances of it. So that *that* Remiſſion of Sins which the *Eternal Word* gave whilſt he tabernacled among the *Jews*, was nothing near ſo *perfect* and *compleat* as that which he afterwards proclaimed in the Tabernacle of our Fleſh, becauſe it neither extended to all Kinds of Sins, nor yet to all Kinds of Puniſhments; it left *ſome* unforgiven as to the Puniſhments of this Life, and it left *all* unforgiven as to the Puniſhments of the Life to come. But having pitched his Tabernacle in our Fleſh, he did by the *meritorious* Sacrifice of himſelf obtain of his Father this *publick* Act of Grace, this *free* Char-

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ter of Mercy for all Mankind, That whoſoever would repent and amend, whatſoever Sins he is guilty of, whatſoever Puniſhments he is obliged to, he ſhall certainly be forgiven them all, and be as freely received into God's Grace and Favour, as if he never had offended him; for he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the World; *And by him*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes*, *Acts* 13.39. In this reſpect therefore the *Eternal Word* dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in that he proclaimed ſuch a *full* and *perfect* Pardon of all Sins, and of all Puniſhments to all that with a *true* Faith and *hearty* Repentance, ſhould turn unto him; and accordingly this Pardon is frequently called by the Name of *Grace*, or *of the Grace of God*, and *of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Acts* 15.11. *Heb.* 12.15. & *Rom.* 3.24.

4*thly*. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in reſpect of the *internal* Grace and Aſſiſtance, which he ſo abundantly afforded us above what he did to the *Jews* under the Law of *Moſes* when he tabernacled among them. I make no doubt but *God* in all Ages hath been always ready to aſſiſt *good* Men in their Duty. This the very *Heathens* themſelves believed, that χωρὶς δαίμονος οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς, that *God* did concur with all *good* Men, and that

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no Man did ever arrive to any *eminent* Degree of Virtue without a *Divine* Afflatus, or Aſſiſtance. And had the *good* Men among the *Jews* been *ignorant* of this, what ſhould move them to pray, as we find they often do, that *God* would *waſh* and *cleanſe*, and *quicken* and *ſtrengthen*, and *inliven* them? For ſo, in the *Book of the Pſalms*, you find *good David* very often praying that *God would teach him his Commandments, and incline his Heart to keep them, and keep him back from preſumptuous Sin.* By which Prayers it's evident they had *good* Encouragment to hope that *God* would be ready to concur with them, and to bleſs their *pious* Endeavours with the *internal* Aſſiſtance of his Grace and Spirit. And this Encouragement I ſuppoſe they might have partly from their *natural* Notions of *God*, which muſt needs ſuggeſt to them that He being infinitely *good*, as he is, will never be wanting to his Creatures in any thing that is *neceſſary* to the obtaining thoſe *noble* Ends for which he created them, and conſequently that he will be aſſiſtant to them in their Duty, which is the way to that End, and not leave them to contend with Difficulties which are *inſuperable* to their *natural* Power and Ability; and partly from thoſe *general Evangelical* Promiſes which *God* made to them by the

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Patriarchs and *Prophets*, from whence they might fairly infer that he who had promiſed to do ſo much for them, upon Condition they perſiſted in their Duty and Allegiance to him, would never be wanting on his Part to ſtrengthen and enable them to it. But I can by no means allow that they were encouraged to hope for any *ſuch* Aſſiſtance from any Promiſe of that Law which the *Eternal Word* gave them when he tabernacled among them, and by which in his Father's ſtead he ruled and governed them; and that both becauſe there is no ſuch Promiſe found in all that Law, and becauſe the *Apoſtle* tells us that *the Law was weak through the fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 3. and calls it *the Miniſtration of Death written and engraven in ſtones*, in oppoſition to *the Miniſtration of the Spirit that is not written in Tables of ſtone, but in fleſhly Tables of the heart*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, 8. comp. with *v.* 3. And, *Galat.* 3. 13, 14. you find the *Apoſtle* oppoſes to the *Curſe of the Law*, the Bleſſing of *Abraham*, and the *Bleſſing of Abraham* he tells us is *the Promiſe of the Spirit through Faith*, that is, by the *Goſpel*. And thus under the Law there was doubtleſs an *internal* Grace and Aſſiſtance vouchſafed to *good* Men, though not promiſed by it; yet after the *Eternal Word* forſook the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and came to tabernacle in our Fleſh,

Fleſh, it's evident that then he did more plentifully communicate this his Grace to the World than ever; for then the *Spirit* was ſaid to be ſhed upon us abundantly through *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; and in the 16th *ver.* of this 1ſt. of *John*, we are ſaid *of his fulneſs to receive* χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, *Grace upon Grace*, that is, Grace heaped upon Grace, and a *vaſt overflowing* Abundance; according to that of *Theognis*, δοίης τ' ἀντ' ἀνιῶν ἀνίας, that is, thou giveſt me Calamities upon Calamities. So that unleſs we will our ſelves, it is now *impoſſible* we ſhould fall ſhort either of our Duty, or the *bleſſed* Reward of it, ſince our *Saviour* is become ſuch an *overflowing* Fountain of Grace to us, and hath promiſed to communicate it to us in ſuch *plentiful* Effuſions if we will ſincerely ask, and honeſtly endeavour after it; and therefore in this reſpect alſo he may well be ſaid *to dwell among us full of Grace*, in that while he dwelt among us he obtained for, and promiſed to us ſuch an *accumulated* Plenty of *inward* Grace and Aſſiſtance to encourage and enable us to do his Commandments.

5*thly*. He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in reſpect of the Vaſtneſs of the Recompence which he promiſed to us, and which *infinitely* exceeds whatſoever he promiſed when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. For when

when the *Eternal Word* reigned over *Iſrael* as the *Vice-Roy* and Subſtitute of his Father, he only acted the Part of their *Civil* Sovereign or Governour; which Part he continued till they choſe *another* King, and then he reſigned his Title to the *ſucceeding* Heirs of *David*. And accordingly we find, that when the *Iſraelites* firſt deſired a King of *Samuel*, God bids him hearken to their Cry; *For*, ſaith he, *they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them*, 1 *Sam.* 8. 7. Which is a *plain* Argument that before he only acted as their *Political* Prince in that he interprets their deſiring *another* King, to be a rejecting of him from reigning over them. For had he been no otherwiſe King over *Iſrael*, than as he is over *other* Nations where the *true* Religion is owned and profeſſed, his Dominion might have fairly conſiſted with that of *another* King or Sovereign; and it would have been no more a rejecting God's Rule for *Iſrael* to deſire a King, than it is for *France*, or *Spain*, or *England*. For it's plain the *Iſraelites* did not reject God's *Divine* Dominion, which he claims over the World as the *Omnipotent* Creator of all things; for then their Deſire of a King had been *Idolatry*, and the Kings whom they deſired had been *Idols*, or *falſe* Gods. It is plain therefore, that it was his

Political Dominion only which they rejected by desiring *another* King to reign in his stead, which he interprets as their Intention to rob and divest him of that *Civil Authority* which till then he had claimed and exercised among them. So that the *plain* Sense of their Desire was this, *God* shall no longer be our *Civil Sovereign*, but for the *future* we are resolved to have a King from among *our* selves, even as *other* Nations round about us, whom we will invest with the same *Civil Authority* which hitherto he hath challenged and exercised among us. *God the Eternal Word* therefore being their *Civil Prince* or Ruler, as such he gave them the *Mosaick* Law, which he only designed to be the Rule or Instrument of his *Civil* Government and Dominion; which is the Reason why in *that* Law he only promised *civil* or *temporal* Blessings, because it was only a Law of *Civil* Government, and as such could design no further than the *civil* or *temporal* Happiness of those who were to be ruled and governed by it. And accordingly if you peruse the Promises of that Law, you will find that they all consist of *outward* and *temporal* Blessings; such as *Health* of Body, and *Victory* over their Enemies, *Peace* among themselves, and with their *Neighbouring* Nations, *Plenty* of Bread, and the *Conveni-*

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ences of Life, and *Succeſs* and *Proſperity* in all their Affairs; and therefore the *Author to the Hebrews* calls the *Goſpel* the bringing in of a *better Hope*, and upon this Account oppoſes it to the Law of *Moſes*, *Heb.* 7. 19. which plainly implies that *that* Law brought in no *better Hope* than that of a *temporal* Happineſs; and thoſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, *Gal.* 3. 12. *The Law is not of Faith; but, The Man that doth them, ſhall live in them,* do plainly ſeem to imply this Senſe, The Law propoſing only *preſent* and *ſenſible* Bleſſings to ſuch as do it ſuch as that *Thou ſhalt live a happy and proſperous Life in this World*, doth not require Faith properly ſo called, which is *the Evidence of things not ſeen*; that is, of the *inviſible* Bleſſings of the *other* Life; and *v.* 21. he plainly aſſerts, that if there had been any *other* Law beſides the *Goſpel* that could have *given* that *promiſed* Life, *Righteouſneſs would have been by that Law*; and therefore ſince, as he aſſerts, Righteouſneſs was by no *other* Law but the *Goſpel*, it follows that no other *Law*, no not that of *Moſes*, could give or promiſe *Life eternal*. Not that I make the *leaſt* Doubt, but *good* Men under the Law of *Moſes* did firmly believe a *future* Happineſs; for this the very *Heathens* themſelves had very *great* Hopes and Expectations of, though they never had ſo

much Reaſon as the *Jews* to induce them to believe: For, beſides all thoſe *weighty* Arguments which were *common* to them with the *Heathens*, they had thoſe *general Evangelical* Promiſes which *God* made to the *Patriarchs* of *being their God*, and *their exceeding great Reward*; the Hiſtories of the Tranſlations of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and of *ſundry* moſt *eminent* Examples of God's *exceeding* Love to Goodneſs and *good* Men, from whence they might eaſily infer, that ſure he had *better* Rewards in ſtore for them than any of the *tranſitory* Bleſſings of this Life, eſpecially when they ſaw how many *good* Men were deprived of theſe, and left *naked* and *deſtitute* of all *worldly* Comforts: Beſides all which, in every Age they had Prophets that were *divinely* inſpired, and who, among all the Secrets that were revealed to them, cannot be ſuppoſed to have been wholly unacquainted with the *typical* Meaning of their Ceremonies and Polity, which among *other* things preſignified the *glorious* Recompences of the Life to come. But however they came by it, I think it is very apparent from *ſundry* Paſſages in the *Book of the Pſalms*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, that they were far from being Strangers to the Doctrine of a *bleſſed* Immortality *hereafter*; though I think it is very *apparent* from what hath

hath been ſaid, that they did not derive their Belief of this Doctrine from any *expreſs* Promiſe of their Law. But yet it is very *apparent*, that though they were not altogether *unacquainted* with it, yet 'twas never ſo clearly diſcovered to *them* by the *Eternal Word* as it was afterwards to *us* by the *Word Incarnate*, ſince, as the *Apoſtle* tells us, *He brought Life and Immortality to light by the Goſpel:* For therein he hath moſt clearly promiſed it to us, and as far as *humane* Language can expreſs, explained and unfolded its Nature; and by his *own* Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion into *Heaven*, hath given us a *clear* and *viſible* Demonſtration of its Truth and Reality; ſo that now the Exiſtence of it is become as *certain* to us, as it's *poſſible* for a *Matter of Fact* to be; and we cannot be more infallibly aſſured of it than we are, unleſs we had been perſonally in *Heaven*, and had there ſurveyed its Glories with *our own* Eyes. Well therefore may He be ſaid to have dwelt among us *full of Grace*, ſince he was graciouſly pleaſed to make us ſuch *expreſs* Promiſes of *future* Happineſs, and give us ſuch *ample* Aſſurance of its Reality and Exiſtence. And ſo I have done with the *firſt* Note of Diſtinction between Chriſt's dwelling among *us*, and his dwelling in the *Moſaick Tabernacle:* He dwelt among us *full of Grace.*

2. The *other* Character by which his dwelling among *us* is diſtinguiſhed from his dwelling in the *Moſaick Tabernacle*, is this, that he dwelt among us *full of Truth*. It's *plain* that *Truth* here is not to be underſtood as oppoſed to *Falſhood*, becauſe in that Senſe it is no Note of Diſtinction between theſe *two* Dwellings or Tabernaclings of *Chriſt*, unleſs we ſuppoſe that he did falſly dwell, or act, and repreſent *God* in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, which would be to blaſpheme his Truth and Veracity. *Truth* therefore muſt here be underſtood as oppoſed to *Obſcurity* and *Shadow*, and ſo muſt denote *Clearneſs* and *Reality*, as it very commonly doth. As when we ſay a Picture is not a *true* Man, we do not charge the Picture with a Lye; if it could ſpeak indeed, and ſhould call it ſelf a Man, we ſhould then ſay it were a *lying* Picture for pretending to be what it is not, being only a *ſilent* Reſemblance of him. Thus when the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*, and thereby diſtinguiſhes his tabernacling among *us* from the manner of his dwelling among the *Jews*, it is not ſo to be underſtood as if he had dwelt among them in a *falſe* or *lying* manner, or that *that* Repreſentation which he made to them of *God* and *Divine* Things were *falſe* and *impoſturous*; no, God forbid: But thus, whereas when He inhabited

bited the Tabernacle, he was *full* of *Hieroglyphicks*, or *myſtical* Repreſentations, which though they were *true* Pictures or Shadows of *Divine* Things, yet have not the Truth and Reality of the Things themſelves in them, and conſequently would be Lies and Cheats ſhould they pretend to *be* what they only repreſent; but now he is come to dwell among us, he is *full* of the Things themſelves, of thoſe *Realities* which formerly he only gave us the *Types* and *Shadows* of; now he hath removed all that Scene of Pictures and *myſtical* Repreſentations, and brought the Things themſelves upon the Stage, and expoſed them *naked* to the View of the World. So that *now* he doth not entertain *us*, as *heretofore* he did the *Jews*, with *Emblems* and *Shadows*; but with Truth, and the *real* Subſtances of Things. And thus the Word is very frequently taken in the *New Teſtament*: Thus, *Heb.* 8. 2. the *Chriſtian Church* is called *the true Tabernacle*, in Contradiſtinction to the *Tabernacle of Moſes*; not as if *that* were a *falſe* Tabernacle, but a *typical* one, it being deſigned only as a Shadow of the *Chriſtian Church*, which is the *true* Reality and Subſtance which was pictured and repreſented in it; for ſo the Apoſtle himſelf explains it, *Heb.* 9. 24. *For Chriſt*, ſaith he, *is not entred into the holy*

places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven it ſelf: From whence it's plain, that therefore thoſe *Holy Places* are oppoſed to *true Places*, becauſe they were only Figures, or *myſtical* Repreſentations of ſomething that is *real* and *ſubſtantial*. So, *Dan.* 7. 16. when *Daniel* deſired to know the Truth of that *Prophetick Scene*, it is ſaid, that *One ſtood by, and made him know the Interpretation of the things*; that is, what was the Reality and Subſtance that was repreſented in thoſe Types and Figures. So here, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*, that is, when he dwelt among us he was *full* of the *Subſtance* and *Reality* of thoſe Things which before he was wont to repreſent by *obſcure Emblems* and *Shadows*; now he preſents to us the Things themſelves, and not the *myſtical* Types and Figures of them as formerly he was wont to do. For I think it's very evident, that the *whole* Model of the *Jewiſh Polity* was purpoſely contrived to be an *Emblem* and Repreſentation of the *Goſpel*, and that the *main* Reaſon of thoſe *numerous* Rites and Ceremonies, was to delineate and ſhadow out the *glorious* Myſteries of *Chriſtianity:* For the Apoſtle plainly tells us, that they were all a *ſhadow of things to come*, and that *the Body*, or Subſtance of that Shadow, *was Jeſus Chriſt*,

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Col. 2. 17. And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls them *the Patterns of the things in Heaven*, or the *heavenly* Things; by which it's plain he means *Chriſt*, or the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, ſince he tells us that as it was *neceſſary* that thoſe Patterns ſhould be purified with Blood, ſo it was *neceſſary* that thoſe *Heavenly* Things repreſented by them, ſhould be purified by a *better Sacrifice*, *Heb.* 9. 23. And what other *Heavenly* Things are there but only *Chriſtians* that are purified with this *better Sacrifice* of Chriſt? And in another place the ſame Author tells us, that *the Law hath in it a Shadow of good things to come*, *Heb.* 10. 1. And thus very frequently in the *New Teſtament*, the *ſacred* Rites of the *Moſaick Law* are declared to be Types and Shadows of the *Myſteries* of the *Goſpel*, as particularly in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, which is almoſt wholly ſpent upon this Argument. And this the *Jews* themſelves ſeem to be acquainted with long before the Publication of the *Goſpel*: For ſo the moſt ancient *Jews* look'd upon the Temple as a Type and Figure of the *Heavenly* State; and *Philo* the *Jew*, in his *Allegories of the Law*, and almoſt in all his *other* Writings, makes the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Moſaick* Law to be Types and Figures of ſome *Divine* or *Moral* Truth, and

and particularly the *High Prieſt* to be an *Emblem* of the *Eternal Word*, and his Crown and Veſtments to be Repreſentations of *his* Authority and *Divine* Perfections, wherein he exactly agrees with the Author to the *Hebrews*. And from *ſundry* Paſſages in the *Book of Pſalms* it ſeems evident, that the *good Jews* had a Proſpect beyond the *Outſide* and Letter of the Law, even into the *typical* Senſe and Meaning of it; and that through its *glimmering* Shadows and Reſemblances, they beheld very much of the Subſtance and Realities of the *Goſpel*: For hence probably was that of *David*, *Pſ.* 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*; for certainly the *Secret of the Lord* here cannot be meant the *Fore-knowledge* of *future Events*, ſince under the *Old Teſtament* that was neither reſtrained to *good* Men, nor much *leſs* was it univerſally with them that feared *God*; and therefore it ſeems more probable, that by *it* we are to underſtand thoſe *then ſecret* Myſteries of the *Goſpel*, which were ſo obſcurely repreſented in the Types and Figures of the *Law*; eſpecially if we compare this with that Prayer of *David*, *Pſ.* 119. 18, *Open thou mine Eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy Law*; which methinks plainly intimates that the *good* Man did believe there were

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ſome *wondrous* Myſteries contained under thoſe *dark* and *typical* Repreſentations: And afterwards, *v.* 27. *make me to underſtand the way of thy Precepts, ſo ſhall I talk of thy wondrous Works*; which implies that he believed that there were ſome Things very *myſtical*, and *hard* to be underſtood contained within the Precepts of their Law, which in their *literal* Senſe were *eaſy* and *obvious*, and had nothing of Depths or Myſtery in them; and therefore certainly had he not ſeen ſomething within them beyond their Rine and *Outſide*, he would never have prayed ſo earneſtly as he doth, *that God would teach him his Laws*, and that *he would not hide from him his Commandments*, as he doth, *v.* 19. much leſs would he have imagined that by *underſtanding of them he ſhould be enabled to talk of ſuch wondrous Things*. Afterwards, *v.* 69. he tells us, that *he had ſeen an end of all Perfection, but God's Commandments are exceeding broad*; which denotes that he who had ſeen an End of all Things elſe, had diſcovered ſo *vaſt* and *boundleſs* a Depth in the Commands of *God*, that he could ſee no End of it; whereas it's plain, that the *literal* Meaning of them was very *narrow* and *contracted*, and far from being ſo exceeding *broad*; which argues that the *good* Man had diſcovered under the Letter

ter and Surface of them, a Mine of *myſtical* Senſe which he could not reach the Bottom of, and that *God* had given him a Glimps of thoſe *glorious* Secrets of the *Goſpel* which he had wrapt up, and involved in the *typical* Precepts of the Law. Thus the *Eternal Word* while he tabernacled among the *Jews*, revealed his *Goſpel* to them by *Types* and *Shadows*, and *myſtical Repreſentations* of it, which, though it was very *obſcure* and *imperfect*, yet ſeems to have been the *beſt* and *cleareſt* that the *preſent* State of that People could admit of. For it ſeems plain by the Hiſtory of the *Jews*, that they were naturally a very *rude* and *untractable* People, and doubtleſs they were never worſe than when they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, where their *bad* Temper was doubtleſs very much improved by thoſe *groſs* Idolatries in which they had been educated; ſo that being *bad* themſelves, and alſo extreamly *debauched* by the *wicked* Manners of the *Egyptians*, it is not to be ſuppoſed that they were Subjects capable of the Heights and Purities of *Religion*; for if from the *Depth* of *Immorality*, whereinto they were ſunk, *God* ſhould have immediately ſtrained them up to the *higheſt* Pitch of *Goſpel-Purity*, in all Probability they would never have born it; but like the Strings of a *Muſical Inſtrument*, being wound

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too high, would have been apt to crack and fly in pieces, and wholly to revolt from *God* into thoſe *groſs* Idolatries which yet they were hardly weaned from, and which were ſtill ſo *ſuitable* to their Genius and Temper. So that as yet there was ſo *great* a Gulph between *them* and the *Goſpel*, that 'twas hardly poſſible either for them to go to *that*, or for *that* to come to *them*. And therefore as *God* in his own *high* Wiſdom hath placed a *Twi-light* between the Night and the Morning to ſecure our Sight leſt our *weak* Eyes ſhould be dazled by a *too ſudden* Irruption of the *Broad-day's* Glory; ſo did he deal with the *Jews*: He thought it not *convenient* immediately to poſt them out of *utter* Darkneſs into *perfect* Light, but firſt interpoſes a *leſs pure Religion* as a *Medium* or *Twi-light* between the *Heathen* and the *Goſpel State*, that ſo by *that* he might prepare their Sight for the Reception of a more *perfect* Splendor, and make them fit to entertain the *ſeverer* Purities of the *Goſpel* without being offended or dazled with its Glory. But yet in Wiſdom he hath ſo contrived and modeled this *leſs perfect Religion*, as to make it moſt *inſtructive* and *uſeful*, having ſo ordered its *ſacred* Rites and Ceremonies as to make them *Repreſentative* of the whole Method and *Oeconomy* of the *Goſpel*; and though thoſe

thoſe *typical* Repreſentations were very *obſcure* and *dark*, ſo that the *Goſpel* ſeemed to run under ground in the midſt of thoſe *Ceremonial* Obſervances, yet it frequently broke forth, and opened it ſelf in the midſt of them, and by degrees in the *Prophetick Age* did make it ſelf a *larger* Channel, till by its Force and Violence it did overthrow theſe Banks, that ſtood in its way, and overſpread the Face of the whole Earth. So that it's *plain* that the Obſcurity of thoſe *typical* Repreſentations did not render them wholly *uſeleſs*, ſince they were not ſo *obſcure*, but thoſe who were *good*, and *diligent*, and *ſerious* in the Study of them might be, and were inſtructed by them in whatſoever was *neceſſary* to make them *good* and *happy*. For though thoſe *Types* had not a Mouth to ſpeak out the *Goſpel*, yet they had a Hand to point to it, they being as it were *rude* Draughts of that which was afterwards to be drawn to the *greateſt* Life and Exactneſs; and this it's plain was underſtood by all *good* Men whoſe Hearts were carried beyond the *outward* Letter of the Law, to the more *inward* and *ſpiritual* Meaning of it; wherein they diſcovered thoſe *Evangelical Myſteries* that were *vailed* and *hidden* under the *outward* Ceremonies, which made up that true *ſpiritual Cabala* which ſeems conſtantly to have been preſerved among

mong the *true Iſraelites*, and which afterwards was more largely commented on by the *Prophets* of the *ſucceeding* Ages, whoſe Care it was to unlock this *Cabala*, or *ſpiritual* Senſe of the Law, and to raiſe up the Hearts of that People to a *higher* Expectation of the *great* Things which were to come. So that you ſee the State and Condition of the *Jews* would not admit of a *plain* Diſcovery of the *Goſpel* to them, but required an *outward Ceremonial Religion*, *that* being moſt *accommodate* to their Genius and Temper; and therefore though the *Eternal Word* for the *preſent* Exigence eſtabiſhed ſuch a *Religion* among them, yet He wiſely framed and modelled it into a *typical* Repreſentation of the *Goſpel*, that ſo thereby he might prepare them for it, and ſo far inſtruct them in the Knowledge of it as was *neceſſary* to their Welfare and Happineſs. And hence the *Apoſtle* tells the *Jews*, that *the Law was their School-maſter to bring them unto Chriſt*, that they might be juſtified by Faith, and that now after *Faith* was come, they were *no longer under their School-maſter*, *Gal.* 3.4,25. that is, while they were in their *Infantine*, *Childiſh* State, and *incapable* of a more *perfect* Inſtitution, *God* ſet the Law as a *School-maſter* over them, that *that* by its *Types*, and *Pictures*, and *Emblems*, might gradually inſtruct them in the *Myſteries* of *Chriſt*,

Chriſt, and the *Goſpel*, that ſo when it was openly revealed they might be *juſtified* by the Belief of it; and therefore now ſince the *Goſpel* was come, they were no longer under the Tutorage of that *School-maſter*, now they were no longer to learn *Chriſt* by *Types* and *myſtical* Repreſentations, ſince he himſelf was preſent with them, and had openly revealed thoſe *Divine* Myſteries which under thoſe *Types* were ſo obſcurely *adumbrated*. So that you ſee the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews* in a far *different* manner from what he did when he pitched his Tabernacle in *our* Natures; for when he tabernacled among *them* he was *full* of *Types*, and *Shadows*, and *myſtical Emblems*; He inſtructed them in *Divine* Things by *Symbols*, and *obſcure* Repreſentations; but when he came to tabernacle among *us*, and in *our* Natures, he was *full of Truth*, that is, of *Subſtance* and *Reality*: For then inſtead of the *Shadows* and *Pictures* of them, he exhibited to us the Things themſelves; then he brought down the *Myſteries* of the *Goſpel* out of that Cloud of *Types* in which they were before involved, and ſet them before us in a *clear* and *open* Light.

But that I may more *fully* demonſtrate this to you, I ſhall briefly give you ſome *particular* Inſtances of his dwelling, or converſing

verſing among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure typical* Way of his converſing or tabernacling among the *Jews*; which I ſhall rank under theſe four Heads:

1. His *Perſonal* Tranſactions.
2. The *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws.
3. The *Condition* and *Quality* of his Kingdom.
4. The *Rewards* and *Recompences* which he promiſes to his Subjects.

1. One *great* Inſtance of his converſing among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure* and *typical* Way of his converſing among the *Jews*, is his *own Perſonal* Tranſactions. The *Eternal Word* being to aſſume our Natures, thought fit to give the *Jews* whilſt he tabernacled among them, a *Specimen* or Pattern of thoſe *glorious* Things he was to tranſact in his *Incarnate State*; and this he did chiefly by the *High Prieſt*, and thoſe *Expiatory Sacrifices* which he ordained and inſtituted among them, as you may find it demonſtrated at large in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. For as to the *High Prieſt*, he was *to be called, and ordained of God*, *Heb.* 5. 4. in which the *Eternal Word*

repreſented to them his Commiſſion from the Father, to deſcend into the World as his *Embaſſador* to Men. *Secondly*, He was to be born of a Woman that came a *pure Virgin* into the Arms of his Father, *Levit.* 21. 14. in which he ſeems to repreſent to them his own *pure* Nativity of a *Virgin-Mother*. *Thirdly*, He was to be waſhed with Water, and his Fleſh and Loyns were to be covered with the *whiteſt* and the *cleaneſt* Linnen, *Exod.* 29. 7. and 28. 42. by which Chriſt *typified* to them the *IMMACULATE* Sanctity and Innocence of his *humane* Life. *Fourthly*, He was to be clothed in the moſt *glorious* Garments that could poſſibly be made by the moſt *excellent* Workmen, *Exod.* 28. 2, 3. which ſeems to denote the *Majeſty* of Chriſt's Perſon, and thoſe *glorious* Works by which he render'd himſelf ſo *illuſtrious* in the World. *Fifthly*, The Colours of the *Embroideries* of his Garment being *blue*, *purple*, *ſcarlet*, and *white*, ſeem to denote the *Truth* of his *Prophetick Office*, the *Majeſty* of his *Royal*, the *Perfection* of his *Prieſtly*, and his *Innocence* and *Sanctity* in the Execution of them all. *Sixthly*, He wore a *holy Crown* on his Head, and a *Plate* on his Forehead engraven with *Holineſs*; which denotes the *Divine* Authority of *Chriſt*, and the *Sacredneſs* and *Divinity* of his

his Perſon. And, *Seventhly*, Upon his Breaſt he wore the *Urim* and *Thummim*, in which was prefigured the *Height* and *Purity* of Chriſt's Doctrine, and the *Holineſs* and *Perfection* of his Laws. In a word, the *High Prieſt* was to offer Sacrifice for the Sins of the People, on the *great day of Expiation*, which Sacrifice was to be a *Beaſt without blemiſh* voluntarily preſented at the Door of the Tabernacle, whither the *High Prieſt* being come, he was to ſtrip *off* his *glorious* Garment, to lay his Hand on the Head of the Beaſt, and to confeſs the Peoples Sins over it, and then to ſlay the Beaſt, and carry *ſome* of the Blood of it within the *Vail*, and ſprinkle it upon, and before the *Mercy-Seat*, by which he is ſaid to make an Attonement for their Sins; that is, to obtain Authority from *God* to bleſs and pardon: In which the *Eternal Word* gives us a *plain* Repreſentation of his *future Sacrifice* upon *Earth*, and *Interceſſion* in *Heaven*; for he being both our *Sacrifice* and *High Prieſt*, did freely diveſt himſelf of the Glory and Dignity of his *Humane Nature*, and offer up himſelf to die for us; by which he laid his Hand as it were upon his own *ſpotleſs* and *immaculate* Head, did as our *Repreſentative* acknowledge what we had deſerved, that for our Sins we have juſtly merited to die

for ever by the Hand of *God*, even as He for our ſakes did ſubmit to die by the Hand of Man: And having performed this *bloody Sacrifice*, he enters into *Heaven*, which is the true *Holy of Holies*, and there by the Oblation of his Blood and Obedience, makes an Atonement for our Sins, and obtains Authority from his Father to pardon and receive into Favour every truly *penitent* Offender in the World. Thus you ſee how the *Perſonal Tranſactions* of our *Saviour* were under the Law of *Moſes* repreſented in *myſtical* Types and Figures; but when he came to tabernacle among *us*, he did all *that* which before he only repreſented: He actually came down from the Father to us, was born of the *Holy Virgin*, lived a moſt *holy* and *innocent* Life, died a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, and is gone into *Heaven* to intercede for us: So that now inſtead of *Types* and *Figures*, we have the *Subſtances* and *Realities* that were obſcurely ſhadowed and repreſented in them.

2. Another *great* Inſtance of his converſing among us *full of Truth*, is the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws. It's *apparent* that thoſe which he gave to the *Jews*, according to the *literal* Senſe of them, did only oblige them to an *external Obedience*; and therefore St. *Paul* calls the whole Law a *carnal*

nal Commandment, *Heb.* 7. 16. and the Precepts of it he calls *carnal Ordinances impoſed upon them till the time of Reformation*, *Heb.* 9. 10. But yet it is apparent that by theſe *carnal Ordinances* the *Eternal Word* did deſignedly *typify* and repreſent that *internal* Purity of Soul which the *Evangelical Law* doth exact: For he ſeeing that the *Jews* were not only a *perverſe*, but alſo a *dull* and *ſottiſh* People, as thoſe generally are who are born and bred in Slavery, and that therefore they were *incapable* of *ſublime* and *ſpiritual* Precepts, and would be apt to forget *plain* ones, He therefore thought it moſt *proper* and *ſuitable* to their Capacity and Genius to inſtruct them by *ſenſible* and *material* Signs, even as Parents do ſometimes teach their Children by Pictures; for of this his Condeſcention to their Dulneſs and Capacity, the Prophet *Iſaiah* takes notice, *Chap.* 28. 10, 11. where he ſaith, that he gave them *Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little with a ſtammering tongue*; that is, he look'd upon them as Children, and ſo condeſcended to their Weakneſs, and ſpoke to them in their *own* Dialect. And this Way of inſtructing them by *outward* and *viſible* Signs was the moſt *probable* to take effect, becauſe it was much in uſe in the *Eaſtern Countries*, but more eſpecially

in *Egypt*, whose Manners they were infinitely fond of, to wrap up their most *excellent* Precepts in *Hieroglyphicks*, which were nothing but Pictures and *material* Signs, by which they represented their *Divine* and *Moral* Institutions. Thus therefore by such *visible* Signs and Pictures, the *Eternal Word* instructed them in the Rules of *internal* Purity and Goodness; so by *Circumcision* he signified to them the Circumcision of their Hearts; and by their *several Washings*, Purity from *Hypocrisy* and *Sensuality*; yea this was probably the Intent of that Difference of *Meats*, as St. *Barnabas* in his Epistle tells us, that Swines Flesh was pronounc'd *unclean*, to instruct them not to live like *Hoggs* that clamour when they are *hungry*, and forget their Masters when they are *full*; that *Eagles* and such *ravenous Birds* were forbidden to be eat, to teach them that those who live not by *Industry*, but *Rapine*, are *abominable*; that *Fish without Scales*, which generally dwell in the Mud, were all pronounced *unclean*; to teach them the Evil of *Sensuality*, and *Earthly-mindedness!* Thus by these *outward* Signs his Intent was to insinuate into them *internal* Purity of Mind; and this was very well understood by those who were *good* and *wise* among them: Hence we find *David* gives very *high Encomiums*

mums of the Law, *Pſ.* 19. 7, 8. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wiſe the ſimple; rejoycing the Heart, enlightning the Eyes*, &c. which Characters are *proper* only to that *inward* and *ſpiritual* Senſe of the Law that was *decyphered* upon thoſe *outward* Signs and Ceremonies. Which Senſe ſeems to have been very *little* taken notice of by the *Jottiſh Vulgar*; for only the Ceremony it ſelf was Matter of Law to them, which if they obſerved they were not *puniſhable* by that Law, though they never took notice of its *ſpiritual* Senſe and Meaning, which made them neglect that *inward* Purity which was pictured on thoſe *outward* Signs, and place the whole of their Righteouſneſs in an *outſide ceremonious* Pageantry. Hence is that of St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14, 15. *I uſed*, ſaith he, *great plainneſs of Speech: And not as Moſes, which put a Vail over his Face, that the Children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly look unto the end of that which is aboliſhed. But their Minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the ſame Vail untaken away, in the reading the Old Teſtament; which Vail is done away in Chriſt.* By which *Vail* he means thoſe *outward* Shadows and Types in which the *myſtical* Senſe of the Law was wrapt and involved; and it ſeems they were ſo taken with the Pomp and Gaity of the *out-*

ſide, that they never minded that *rich* Treaſure of Senſe that was contained within it, and which the *Apoſtle* here calls *the End of that which is aboliſhed*; yea, *to this day*, ſaith he, the Vail of *outward* Ceremonies ſtands ſo much in their Light that they cannot diſcern the *internal* Senſe of the *Old Teſtament*; but now, ſaith he, it is *done away by Chriſt*. Now that the *Eternal Word* hath pitched his Tabernacle in our Nature, thoſe *outward* Types wherein this *inward* Purity of Soul was ſo obſcurely intimated, are vaniſhed like Clouds before the Sun, and in their room are introduced the moſt *pure* and *ſpiritual* Laws of the Goſpel, which are no longer couched in Types and *Ceremonial* Shadows, but in *plain* and *naked* Propoſitions. Now *internal* Holineſs is palpably declared to be the *great* Deſign of *Religion*, that we ſhould *cleanſe our ſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.* This therefore is *another* Inſtance of Chriſt's tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, *viz.* the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws, which heretofore he *myſtically* repreſented to the *Jews* by *outward* Rites and Ceremonies.

3. Another Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure typical* Way of his converſing among

among the *Jews*, is the Condition and Quality of his *Church* and *Kingdom*. The *Eternal Word*, deſigning to erect a *glorious* Kingdom in the World, drew as it were a *rude* Scheme or Draught of it in the Form and Model of the *Jewiſh Polity*. For *firſt* he erects a Kingdom among them of which himſelf was King, to typify that *Spiritual* Kingdom which afterwards he meant to eſtabliſh in the World; then he adopts the *Jews* to be his Children by the *external* Sign of *Circumciſion*, who are therefore called a *Holy Seed*, which was an Emblem of that *holy* Seed which afterwards he deſigned to beget to himſelf by *ſpiritual* Regeneration, which is therefore called the *Circumciſion of the Heart, whoſe Praiſe is not of Men, but of God.* His delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and leading them through the *Red-Sea* and the Wilderneſs into *Canaan*, typified his delivering of his *future Church* from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and leading it by his own *gracious* Preſence through the *Red-Sea* of Blood, and Perſecutions, and the Wilderneſs of the World to the *Canaan* of *eternal* Reſt. His giving the Law on *Mount Sinai* in Fire, was a Figure of his delivering the *Goſpel* by the Spirit, which came down in *fiery cloven Tongues* at the *Feaſt of Pentecoſt*. Thus his erecting the Ark in the Wilderneſs

derneſs was alſo *another* Type of that *Spiritual* Kingdom which afterwards he meant to erect in the World. The *divers* Ornaments and Inſtruments of that Tabernacle repreſented the Diverſity of *ſpiritual* Gifts and Functions in the *Chriſtian Church*; its being covered with Skins *without*, and adorned with Gold *within*, ſhadowed the *mean* and *contemptible* Form wherein the *Chriſtian Church* firſt appeared to the World, notwithſtanding the *inward* Glory and Purity with which it was adorned and embelliſhed. The Glory of *God* appearing in the Tabernacle, denoted the Preſence of *Chriſt* in his *Church*, which he hath promiſed to continue to the end of the World; its being removed from Place to Place, and finding no Reſt till it was lodged in the Temple, prefigured the *perſecuted* State of the *Primitive Church*, which was hunted *up* and *down* the World by the *mighty Nimrods* of the Earth, and could find no Reſt till it was tranſported to the *Heavenly* Temple. By theſe and ſuch like *Types* and *Shadows* did the *Eternal Word* prefigure the State and Condition of his *future Church*, that ſo when it came to be erected in the World, the *Jews* might know and own it, having ſeen it before-hand ſo exactly *decyphered* and *adumbrated* in the very Frame and Model of their *own* Polity.

But

But when he came to tabernacle in our Nature he gave *actual* Being to thoſe Things which before he only *ſhadowed* and *repreſented*; for then he erected this *glorious Church*, of which the *Jewiſh* was only a Model and Platform, delivered it from the *Egyptian* Bondage of Wickedneſs and Idolatry, and by his own *glorious* Preſence conducted the Members of it through all the Perſecutions of an *enraged* World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal Reſt*; and therefore this alſo is *another plain* Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, the State and Condition of his Church, which before was ſo obſcurely repreſented.

4. And laſtly, *Another* Inſtance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradiſtinction to that *obſcure* and *typical* Way of his converſing among the *Jews*, is the *glorious* Recompences which he hath ſo plainly and clearly promiſed to his Subjects. For this he alſo obſcurely *typified* to the *Jews*; for, as I have already hinted, by that *Canaan* which he beſtowed upon them after their *tedious* Travel through the Wilderneſs, he did darkly repreſent to them that *Canaan above* flowing with *infinite* Delights, which he hath promiſed to beſtow upon his *faithful* Servants after they have paſs'd through the Wilderneſs of this World. So alſo by their

their *Sabbaoths*, and eſpecially their *Year of Jubilee*, wherein they were to reſt from all their Labours, and keep a *perpetual* Feſtivity, He did obſcurely *decypher* to them that *Sabbaoth of Reſt*, and *Jubilee* of *endleſs* Pleaſure which *vertuous* Souls ſhall enjoy in *Heaven* after they have finiſhed their Labours here on *Earth*, as you may ſee at large *Heb.* 4. Now by theſe and ſuch like *Shadows* of their Law, which poſſibly the Prophets by *Divine* Inſpiration might expound to them, thoſe who were *wiſe* and *good* among them, it is very probable, were inſtructed in the Article of *eternal* Life. Hence it may be might ariſe that *famous* Controverſy among the *Jews* concerning the *Written* and *Oral* Law, which they call the *Cabala*, or the Law by Tradition; not that this *traditional* contained any thing that was not in the *written* Law, but becauſe thoſe things which were obſcurely contained in the *Types* of the *written* Law were explained and interpreted in this their *Traditional* Law. But it is *apparent* that the *Types* of *eternal Life* were not fully explained in this *traditional* Law till after the *Babyloniſh Captivity*, after which the Prophet *Daniel*, and after him *Ezekiel* began to ſpeak more plainly of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*; and from that Time forwards the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*

rection and *eternal Life*, began to be more openly taught among the *Common People* till about the Time of the *Maccabees*, when it was brought forth into the Light from under thoſe *Types* in which it was ſo obſcurely repreſented, and became a Principle even of the *Popular Religion*, and an Article of the *Jewiſh Faith*, as plainly appears from the Records of thoſe Times, particularly 2. *Macc.* 7. 23, 26. comp. with *Heb.* 11. 35. And indeed it was very *neceſſary* that then this Article ſhould be more clearly revealed to fortify the *Jews* againſt thoſe many Perſecutions whereunto they were expoſed for the ſake of their *Religion*, that they might not be terrified to *apoſtatize* from it by thoſe *cruel* Martyrdoms which in the Time of the *Maccabees* they many of them endured; and beſides, now the Time of the *Goſpel* was approaching, and conſequently its Myſteries, like the Light of the *riſing* Sun, began to break forth *clearer* and *clearer* from under that Cloud of *Types* wherein it was wrapt and involved, till at laſt the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* himſelf aroſe and diſperſed thoſe Clouds, and brought *Life and Immortality to light by the Goſpel*. But as for the *Sadducees*, who give no heed to the *Cabala*, or *Traditional* Law, in which this Doctrine was firſt diſcovered, and adhered only to the *written* Law of *Moſes*,

ſes, they ſtill continued Infidels in this Point, and believed neither *Angels* nor *Spirits*, nor the *Life to come*: So very obſcurely was it repreſented in the *Types* and *Shadows* of the *Written* Law. But when once the *Eternal Word* came to tabernacle in our Fleſh, he revealed this *great* Article ſo plainly and clearly to the World, that 'tis impoſſible for any one not to believe it that believes him to be the *Meſſias*, or *Incarnate Word*.

And thus you ſee by all theſe Inſtances what a *vaſt* Difference there was in reſpect of *Truth*, between Chriſt's tabernacling in our Nature, and in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. And now I ſhall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three practical* Inferences.

1*ſt*. He dwelt or tabernacled among us.] From hence I infer the *high* Authority of *Chriſt*, and that *holy Religion* which he hath revealed to us. For to tabernacle among us, as I have already ſhewed you, ſignifies to dwell in the midſt of, as the *Shechinah*, *Preſence*, or *Repreſentative* of the moſt *High God*, as one that acted in his Father's Perſon, and was veſted with his Authority, and conſequently as one who hath as *great* a Right to exact our Obedience as the *Eternal Father* himſelf, ſhould he have come down from *Heaven* in his own Perſon to give Laws to Mankind. For ſo when the *Eternal Word* went

went before the Camp of *Iſrael* as the *Shechinah*, or *Angel of God's Preſence*, God requires them that they ſhould obey *him* as himſelf; *Beware of him, and obey his Voice*, ſaith God; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Tranſgreſſion, for my Name is in him*, Exod. 23. 21. and *v.* 22. To obey the Voice of this *Angel* is interpreted to be the ſame thing, as to obey the Voice of the moſt *High God* himſelf; *But if thou ſhalt indeed obey his Voice*, ſaith God, *and do all that I ſpeak, then I will be an Enemy to thy Enemies*, &c. So that for the *Iſraelites* to diſobey this *Angel* (who, as I have proved to you, was the *Eternal Word*, or *Repreſentative* of the moſt *High God* to them) was to all Intents and Purpoſes the ſame Thing as if they had diſobeyed the moſt *High* himſelf. And accordingly our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me but on the Father that ſent me*; that is, he doth not meerly believe on me, but on the Father *too*, whoſe Authority I have, and whoſe Perſon I repreſent; for ſo he explains himſelf in the *following* Verſe, *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me*; that is, I being my Father's *Shechinah*, or *Repreſentative*, *Joh.* 12. 44, 45. And therefore as every Contempt of the *Deputy*, or *Vice-Governor*, is an Affront to the *Sovereign* Prince whoſe Perſon he

he bears, and by whoſe Authority he acts; ſo every Rebellion againſt *Chriſt* is an *open* Defiance to the *Sovereign God* whoſe Perſon he repreſents, and by whoſe Authority he reigns. Hence our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *Joh.* 5. 23. that *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him*; which plainly intimates that *God* the Father reſents thoſe Indignities which we offer to *Chriſt* and his Laws, as if they were done to his *own* Perſon, and that if *himſelf* ſhould ſpeak to us from the Battlements of *Heaven*, or proclaim his Law to us in a *Voice* of *Thunder*, he would not be more diſpleaſed to hear us openly declare that we will not obey him, than he is to ſee us trample upon the Laws of his *Son* which he hath ſtamp'd with his own *Sovereign* Authority. So that if we were not infinitely *fool-hardy*, methinks we ſhould never dare to violate our *Religion*, in which the Authority of the moſt *High God* is ſo immediately concerned. For whatſoever our *Religion* requires of us, it requires in his Name who hath an *undoubted* Right and Authority to command us; for from all *Eternity* he was inveſted with an *abſolute* and *unlimited* Power of doing any thing that is not *unbecoming* his *Divine* Perfections, and in this the Right of his Dominion over us is originally founded. For

For he that hath Power muſt needs have a Right to exerciſe it ſo far as it is *juſt* and *becoming* his Nature, otherwiſe his Power would be altogether in vain; and therefore ſince *God* from all *Eternity* hath a Power of doing whatſoever he pleaſes ſo far as is *conſiſtent* with his Holineſs and Goodneſs, there is nothing can be pretended againſt the Right of his Dominion and Authority over us: For God *cannot* but have an *eternal* Right to exerciſe his *own* Power, and he cannot but have an *immutable* Right to exerciſe it over his *own* Creatures. And as from all *Eternity* he had Power to do whatſoever was *juſt* and *becoming* him, ſo from his creating of us it became moſt *juſt* and *becoming* that he ſhould rule and govern us; for we became *his* as ſoon as we were created by him; all our Powers of Action were from him, and by that he hath acquired an *unalienable* Right in whatſoever we are able to do. We have nothing but what is *his* Gift, and therefore can do nothing but what is *his* Debt; we received *all* from him, and therefore muſt owe *all* to him; for by Right of Creation he is the *ſupream* Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, and as ſuch hath a *juſt* Claim to all the Homage and Obedience that we are able to render him. So that as God's Dominion over us is

originally founded in his moſt *abſolute* Power to do whatſoever is *juſt* and *becoming* him; ſo the Juſtice and Becomingneſs of his Dominion over us doth immediately reſult from his creating of us, by which he hath *for ever* intitled himſelf to all the Obedience we can render him. And by Virtue of this *immutable* Title doth he claim our Obedience to the Laws of *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom next to himſelf he hath made our Prince and Ruler, having veſted him with his own *Sovereign* Authority, and conſtituted him his *ſupream* Repreſentative in the *Church*. So that by diſobeying his Laws we incur the Guilt of the moſt *monſtrous* Injuſtice in the World; we reſume our ſelves from *him* to whom we owe our Being, and refuſe to own *our ſelves* to be his Creatures from whoſe Bounty we receive even the Power of rebelling againſt him; we alienate our Faculties from thoſe *ſacred* Uſes whereunto they were deſigned and conſecrated, and turn theſe *living* Temples of *God* into Dens of *impure* Thoughts and *filthy* Luſts; In a word, we fight againſt *God* with his *own* Gifts, and arm the Effects of his Bounty againſt his *Sovereign* Authority. And what do we think will be the Conſequence of theſe Things? Can we be ſo *ſottiſh* as to imagine that the *Almighty* Father will ſit above in the *Heavens*,

Heavens, and ſee how his Laws are trampled upon, his Authority contemned, and expoſed to Scorn and Deriſion by a Company of *impious* Wretches that owe their very Beings to him, and never be concerned at it? Do we think him ſo *ſtupid* a Being as that no Provocations will awake his Vengeance, that he will *for ever* ſit *unconcerned* with his Hands in his Boſom whilſt his *violated* Laws, like the *Souls under the Altar*, are continually crying out to him, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! doſt thou not avenge our Quarrel upon the Heads of theſe audacious Rebels that every day trample us under foot, and have no more regard for our Authority than they have for the Whiſtling of the Wind!* For God's ſake, Sirs, let us conſider before it be *too* late what is like to become of us, what *probable* Hopes of Security we can propoſe to *our ſelves* if we perſiſt in this *unjuſt* Rebellion. Gird up your Loins like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of *God*, do you think that the *wiſe* Governor of the World will be *for ever inſenſible* of all the *rude* Affronts and Provocations you offer him? If ſo, pray where is his *Wiſdom*, or in what Senſe doth he govern the World, if he takes no care to ſecure his Laws by *puniſhing* Offenders, and lets his Subjects alone to do as they liſt? Or have you an Arm as *ſtrong* as

God's? Can you grapple with his *Almighty* Vengeance, or withſtand the Stroke of his Thunderbolts? Sure ſuch a *ridiculous* Conceit can never enter into any *reaſonable* Breaſt? and if not, in the Name of *God* what do you propoſe to *your* ſelves when you can neither hope for Favour from *God*, nor Security from *your* ſelves? Are you ſo *abandoned* of all your Reaſon as wilfully to ſhut your Eyes againſt your Danger, and run the *deſperate* Venture of falling into the Hands of the *living God?* Hath not our *bleſſed Lord* moſt fairly warn'd us what we are to truſt to? Hath he not told us how he *values* his Laws, and how dreadfully he will *puniſh* the Tranſgreſſion of them? Hath he not moſt ſeriouſly proteſted to us that unleſs we do *repent* and *amend*, he will never forgive us either in *this* Life, or *that to come*; and that if we ſtill perſiſt in our Rebellions, he will at laſt baniſh us from his Preſence *for ever*, and aſſign us our Portion with *Devils* and *damned Ghoſts* in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone? And hath he not taken it upon his Death that all this is *true*, when he ſo freely *ſealed* his Doctrines with his Blood? And now after all this, is it poſſible we ſhould be ſo *ſenſleſs* as to think we can be *ſafe* in our Wickedneſs, when *God the Father* is engaged both in *Wiſdom* and *Honour* to avenge it as

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an Affront to his Authority, and *God the Son* hath revealed his Father's Wrath from *Heaven* againſt all Unrighteouſneſs and Ungodlineſs of Men? and therefore as we value *our own* Safety, it concerns us either to ſubmit to that *Divine* Authority which is ſtamp'd upon the Laws of our *Saviour*, or elſe to ſecure our ſelves of *ſome* Retreat or Sanctuary from that *Almighty* Vengeance which our Rebellion will certainly arm againſt us.

2*dly*. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.] Hence I infer what *mighty* Encouragement we have to ſerve and obey our *bleſſed Maſter* who in his dwelling among us was *full* of every thing that can render his Service *lovely* or *deſireable*, and abounded in all thoſe *amiable* Graces that can oblige us to love and obey him. For what was there wanting in our *bleſſed Maſter* that any *reaſonable* Subject can deſire in his *Prince* and *Sovereign*? Would he deſire a Prince of a *ſweet* and *gracious* Temper, one that is *full* of Love and Tenderneſs to his Subjects? Such a one in the moſt *eminent* degree is our *bleſſed Lord*; for how doth the Hiſtory of his Converſation upon Earth abound with the Expreſſions of a moſt *ſweet* and *loving* Temper? For Love was the Principle of all his Actions, the Life and Soul of his Converſation, and in all that he did or ſpoke he made ſome *new* Diſcovery

of his *unfeigned* Affection to the World; for he *went about doing good*, and his whole Life was nothing but one *continued Act* of Charity to Mankind. For ſtill you find him either *inſtructing* the *Ignorant*, or *reproving* the *Erroneous*, or *comforting* the *Dejected*, or *feeding* the *Hungry*, or *curing* the *Sick* and *Diſeaſed*. From Morning to Night he was conſtantly engaged in *one good* Action or *other*, and the whole Race of his Life, like that of the Sun, was ſpent in *enlivening* or *inlightning* the World. So *endearing* was his Behaviour that he obliged his very Enemies, and, when he had won them, treated them with all the Tenderneſs and Affection of a moſt *loving* Father towards his *deareſt* Children. From all he converſed with he extorted Reſpect and Veneration, and none were *able* to reſiſt the Charms of his *victorious* Love, but thoſe whoſe Hearts were harder than the *nether* Milſtone. But that I may convince you of the *infinite* Goodneſs and Tenderneſs of his Nature, I will give you but that *one* Inſtance *Luke* 19. 41. *And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it*; which, as you will ſee afterwards, was occaſioned by the Fore-ſight of its *approaching* Ruin and Deſtruction; and yet at the ſame time he foreſaw the Cruelties which thoſe *barbarous* Villains were about to practiſe

practiſe upon him, how they would ſcourge his Body with *knotty* Whips, and nail his Hands and Feet to the Croſs, and thruſt a Spear into his Heart; he ſaw how they would *triumph* over his Miſery, mock at his Calamity, and dance to the Muſick of his *dying* Grones. And now one would have thought ſuch a Proſpect as this would have *for ever* enraged his Soul againſt them, and made him rejoyce to ſee that *ſweeping* Deſtruction that was coming upon them; but ſuch was the *incomparable* Sweetneſs of his Temper, that while he *foreſaw* them plotting *his* Ruin, he could not but ſigh over *theirs*, and while he beheld their Malice all *reeking* in his Blood, and ſporting it ſelf with his Torments and Agonies, yet at the Senſe of their *approaching* Deſtruction his very Bowels *earned*, and his Heart *melted* with Commiſeration, and he could not forbear weeping to think that thoſe *curſed* Inſtruments of all his Miſeries muſt e're long be ſo *wretched* and *miſerable* themſelves, earneſtly wiſhing that they who ſo greedily thirſted for his Blood had known *in that their day the things which belong to their Peace.* And though one would have thought the *barbarous* Entertainment he met with here upon Earth would have *for ever* quenched all his Affections to Mankind, yet ſtill it lives, and in

deſpite of all the Affronts and Outrages he endured, burns as vigorouſly in his Breaſt as ever. So *unconquerable* was his Love to his Subjects, that all the *bloody* Cruelties they practiſed upon him, when they chaſed him out of the World, were never able to *alienate* his Heart and Affections from them; but after all their Cruelties he ſtill retained his Fatherly Bowels towards them, and when he could endure their Torments no longer, breathed out his *loving* Soul in an *earneſt* Prayer for their Pardon, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And now that he is in *Heaven* among *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, where he cannot but remember how unkindly we treated him when he was upon *Earth*, and perhaps doth ſtill bear upon his *glorified Body* thoſe very Wounds which he received from our Hands, which one would think were *ſufficient* to incenſe him againſt us *for ever*; yet his Heart is the *ſame* towards us, *full* of all thoſe *kind* and *tender* Reſentments that firſt brought him down from *Heaven*, and render'd his Converſation among us ſo *full* of Sweetneſs and Endearments. And now being ſo infinitely kind as he is, why ſhould we be diſheartned from ſerving him? Methinks the Senſe of his Love to us, if there were no *other* Argument in the World, ſhould be *ſufficient* to bind

bind us to his Service *for ever.* For, *O my Soul, how can I do too much for ſo kind a Friend! How can I be too ſubmiſſive to ſo good a Maſter! That is ſo infinitely tender of all his Servants, and loves them a thouſand times more than they love themſelves!* Sure if we had any Spark of Ingenuity in us, the Senſe of his *matchleſs* Kindneſs towards us, would be *ſufficient* to turn all our Duty to him into Recreation, to make us thirſt after his Service, and catch at all Opportunities of expreſſing our Loyalty and Obedience to him: We ſhould embrace his Commands as Preferments to us, and wear them as the *greateſt Favours,* and think our ſelves more *honoured* in being the Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt,* than in being made *mighty* Kings and Potentates.

2. Conſider, as he is *full* of Grace, in Reſpect of his own *Perſonal* Diſpoſition, ſo he is alſo in Reſpect of his Laws, in which, as I have already ſhewed you, he requires nothing of us but what is for our *Good,* nothing but what tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and the Conſummation of our Happineſs. All that our *Saviour* requires at our Hands, is only that we ſhould act according to the Laws of a *Reaſonable Nature,* and conſtantly purſue the *great* End of our Creation, which can never be obtained

tained by us, unleſs we regulate our Actions by thoſe *wiſe* and *excellent* Rules which he hath preſcribed us, and which he hath preſcribed us upon no *other* Inducement, but only to oblige us to be *happy*. For as to any Advantage that will accrue to him from our Actions, 'tis altogether *indifferent* to him whether we obey him or no; for he was always infinitely *happy* within himſelf, and would have always been ſo, though we had never had a Being; ſo that his Felicity depends not upon us; and were it not that the *ſuperabundant* Goodneſs of his Nature doth *for ever* incline him to make *us happy* as well as *himſelf*, he would never have concerned himſelf about us, but would have let us alone to do as we liſt, and abandoned us to the Fate of *our own* Actions. He therefore being infinitely *happy* within himſelf, can have no ſelf-Ends to ſerve upon his Creatures; becauſe within the Circle of his own *divine* Being, he hath all that he needs, and all that he deſires; but being infinitely *good*, as he is infinitely *happy*, we are ſure that *our* Good muſt be the only End of his intermedling with our Actions, and his giving Laws to direct them. And if we conſult the *particular* Laws which he hath given us, we ſhall find they all of them moſt naturally tend to *perfect* and *rectifie* our

our *diſordered* Natures, to *exalt* and *ſpiritualize* our Affections, and inſpire us with all thoſe *divine* Diſpoſitions that are requiſite to qualify us for the Happineſs of the World to come. And now methinks, if we had any Senſe of *our own* Intereſt, this Conſideration ſhould mightily encourage us to Obedience, to think that while we are ſerving our *bleſſed Maſter*, we are ſerving *our* ſelves to the *beſt* Purpoſes, and that *his* Service, and *our* Intereſt are ſo combined and united, that by the ſame Actions we may gratify *him*, and do *our ſelves* the *greateſt* Kindneſs in the World; that he exacts nothing from us, but what he was obliged to do by the *infinite* Care and Concern he hath for us; and that he had been leſs *kind*, ſhould he have required *leſs*, and muſt neceſſarily have ſubtracted from us ſome Degree of our Happineſs, ſhould he have abated us any Part of our Duty. *O Bleſſed Jeſus*, who can complain of thy Service, when thy very Commands are Tokens of thy Love; when all the Duty thou requireſt of us, is only to be *kind* to *our ſelves* in doing thoſe things, which, if thou hadſt never commanded, *our own* Intereſt would have obliged us to, had we but underſtood it as well, or regarded it as much as thou doſt?

3. But

3. But then consider again, as He is *full of Grace* to us in his own *personal* Temper, and in those *mild* and *gentle* Laws which he hath given us; so *Thirdly*, He is *full of Grace* to us also in respect of that *gracious* Pardon and Forgiveness which he hath procured for, and promised to us if we will heartily repent and amend. I confess, though his *Personal* Temper should be never so *sweet*, and his Laws never so *gentle*, yet if he should, upon every *wilful* Offence, exclude us from all Hope of Pardon, it might justly discourage the Generality of Men from engaging any farther in his Service; because *more* or *less*, we have all sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God. So that if upon every *wilful* Act of Rebellion, we should stand *for ever* excluded from his Favour; we should generally be left in a *desperate* Condition, and then to what Purpose should we serve him any longer, when by all our *future* Loyalty and Submissions, we must never hope to be readmitted into his Grace and Favour? To remove this *great* Discouragement therefore, the *blessed Jesus* hath obtained for us this *publick Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy from his Father, that if now at last we will repent and amend our Ways, notwithstanding all our *past* Rebellions, we shall find Mercy, and be as freely

ly received into his Grace and Favour, as if we never had offended him; and this *merciful* Grant he hath publiſhed to us in the Promiſes of his Goſpel: So that now we cannot make the *leaſt* Doubt of our Pardon and Acceptance with him, upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, without calling his Truth and Veracity into Queſtion. And now what *reaſonable* Cauſe of Diſcouragement have we from returning to the Service of our *bleſſed Maſter*, when we are ſo amply aſſured that our *paſt* Diſobediences to him ſhall, upon our Return, be forgotten *for ever*? For, in the Name of *God*, what can we deſire more? Is it *reaſonable* that the *wiſe* Governour of the World ſhould pardon Offenders, whether they repent or no; that he ſhould let them take their Swing in Wickedneſs, and never take any Cognizance of their Actions? Let us ſpeak plainly; would we have him govern us or no? If not, we are infinitely *beſotted*, that for the Sake of a *few paltry* Luſts that are our *Plague* and *Shame* would deprive *our ſelves* of all the Bleſſings and Benefits of his Government. But whatſoever we would have, it is by no means fit that he ſhould ſurrender up his *juſt* Authority over us, becauſe we are Fools and Mad-men; and if we think it fit that he ſhould govern us, we cannot be

be ſo *ſenſeleſs* as to think it *reaſonable* that he ſhould pardon our Sins till we repent of them; becauſe by ſo doing he would give *up* all, and leave us *abſolute* Maſters of our ſelves. So that if we *our ſelves* had been called to the *Privy Council* of *Heaven*, to give our Vote to thoſe Laws by which we were to be ruled and governed, doubtleſs we could not have had the Confidence to ask either *gentler* Laws or *greater* Indulgences than the *bleſſed Jeſus* hath freely granted us in his *Goſpel*. If *God* ſhould have told us, that he would impoſe nothing on us without *our own* Conſent, and bid us ask for our ſelves any thing that is *fit* and *modeſt*, doubtleſs the utmoſt that any *modeſt* Man could have craved, would have been only this; *Lord, if thou will be but ſo merciful as to give us ſuch Laws as are ſuited to our Natures, and are conducive to our Happineſs, and ſo far to conſider our Weakneſs and Inſtability, as not caſt us away from thy Favour for ever upon every wilful Tranſgreſſion, but to pardon and receive us again upon our unfeigned Repentance, this is all the Favour we would ask, and for this we would praiſe and adore thy Goodneſs for ever and ever.* Since *God* therefore, out of *his own* Grace and Goodneſs, hath granted this Indulgence to us, why ſhould we be diſcouraged from returning

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to our Duty, though we have never ſo notoriouſly violated and neglected it? For now we are fully aſſured that we can never be excluded from all Hope of Pardon, till we are paſt all Poſſibility of Repentance.

4. He is *full of Grace* to us alſo, in reſpect of that *abundant* Aſſiſtance which he hath promiſed and vouchſafed to us. I do confeſs, though notwithſtanding our *former* Rebellions, he ſhould be never ſo ready to receive us into Favour again upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; yet unleſs he will alſo aſſiſt us in *our* Repentance, and enable us to conquer the Difficulties of it, we have ſtill very *great* Reaſon to be diſcouraged from his Service: For, by *our own evil* Habits, we have ſo diſabled our ſelves from returning to our Duty, that without the Concurrence of a *ſupernatural* Grace, it will be in vain for us to attempt it: For he that from a State of *habitual* Sin, enters into a Courſe of Repentance, muſt ſtrive all along againſt the Current of his Nature, which at *firſt* eſpecially, and when he is *weakeſt*, will be ſo *ſwift* and *impetuous*, that by *his own ſingle* Strength, it will be impoſſible for him to *ſtem* or conquer it, and unleſs he be aſſiſted by a *greater* Strength than *his own*, he will be inevitably born *down* and carried away with it, though he ſtruggle never ſo vi-

vigorouſly againſt it; ſo that it is no Encouragement at all to the Service of *Chriſt*, that he will receive us to Pardon when we heartily repent, unleſs he will alſo inable us to repent by the Concurrence of his *Grace* with our *honeſt* Endeavors. But this Diſcouragement alſo he hath removed out of our Way, by making us a *publick* Grant and Promiſe of his Grace and Aſſiſtance; for he hath aſſured us that he will give his *holy Spirit to every one that asks it*, Luk. 11. 13. that if we will *work out our own Salvation, he will work in us to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. and that *to him that hath*, that is, improves that Grace which he hath, *it ſhall be given more abundantly*, Mat. 13. 12. ſo that though we cannot do all by our own *ſingle* Strength, yet we can do ſo much as will oblige our *bleſſed* Maſter to enable us to do all; and therefore that we do not do all, is as much *our* Fault as if we could, becauſe we are able to do *all* through *Chriſt*, who will ſtrengthen us if we will but do what we can; ſo that this, methinks, ſhould be ſufficient to encourage any *reaſonable* Man in the World to undertake his Service, to conſider that he who is my Maſter, will *co-operate* with me, and *proportion* my Strength to the Work he enjoyns me; that he will not ſtand *ſtill* with his Arms in his

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Boſom, and ſee me ſtruggle in *vain* under an *inſupportable* Burthen of Duties, but that he will ſet *too* his *own* Shoulders, and contribute his *own* Strength, and enable me, by degrees, to undergo it with Eaſe and Alacrity; ſo that though thro' the *Weakneſs* and *Impotency* which I have voluntarily contracted, my Duty is become *too heavy* for my Shoulders, yet I will never be diſheartened ſo long as I am ſure it is not *too heavy* for my Saviour's, for if I heartily endeavour, I am *confident* I ſhall undergo it, if it be in the Power of an *Almighty* Grace to enable me.

5. And laſtly, He was *full of Grace* to us alſo, in Reſpect of that *glorious* Recompence which he hath promiſed to us, and prepared for us. I confeſs, were his Service all Work, and no Wages, there were ſome Reaſon to be diſheartned; but when he hath promiſed, and ſo amply aſſured us, that after we have ſpent a *few* Days or Years in his Service upon *Earth*, he will receive us into the Participation of *his own* Joys, where we ſhall commence as *happy* as it is poſſible for an *everlaſting Heaven* to make us, methinks we ſhould kiſs his Yoke, and court his Service, and think we can never do too much for ſuch a *bountiful* Maſter, who rewards all his Servants with ſuch *immortal* Preferments: For what is the La-

bour of a *few* Moments, compared with that *everlaſting* Reſt and Pleaſure wherein it ſhall ſhortly terminate? And when once we are arrived to the *Heavenly Canaan*, and have taſted thoſe *raviſhing* Delights with which it flows and abounds, how *light* and *inconſiderable* will all theſe Difficulties in our Voyage appear to us, which now do ſo ſtartle and affright us? How ſhall we wonder at *our own* Sloth and Faint-heartedneſs, to think that ever we ſhould be ſuch *wretched* Cowards as to be afraid of any thing that hath *Heaven* at the End of it, which is a Happineſs ſo *vaſt* and *unſpeakable*, that the Hope of it is *ſufficient* to turn Torments into Recreations? How ſhall we be aſtoniſhed at *our ſelves*, to think that we could ever be ſuch *wretched* Fools as to deliberate *one* Moment, whether *Heaven* were *preferable* before all the Pleaſures of Sin, or whether it were more *eligible* to dwell with *Harlots* and *Drunkards* for a Moment, and wallow in their *beaſtly* Pleaſures, than to enjoy the Society of *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, to all *Eternity*? The Odds will then appear ſo *vaſt*, and the Diſproportion ſo *unſpeakable*, that we ſhall wonder how we could ever be ſo *ſenſeleſs* as to make a Compariſon between them. Sure Sirs we do not believe that *Heaven* is the Recompence of Chriſt's Ser-

Service; for if we did, methinks we ſhould more heartily engage in it. For could we ſtand thus *deliberating* upon the Shore, whether we ſhall bid adieu to our Luſts, take Leave of all their *fulſom* Pleaſures, and imbark *our ſelves* in the Service of our *Saviour?* Could we ſtand pauſing *thus* as we do, whether we ſhall venture into thoſe *petty* Storms that are like to attend us in our *ſpiritual* Voyage, did we verily believe that a *few* Leagues Diſtance lies that *bleſſed* Shore where we ſhall be crowned as ſoon as we are landed with all the Joys that an *everlaſting Heaven* means? Certainly the Belief of this is *ſufficient* to put Life and Courage into the moſt *creſt-fallen* Soul in the World, and to give her Spirit and Vigour enough to carry her triumphantly through all the *weary* Stages of her Duty. So that conſidering how, in all Reſpects, our *bleſſed Lord* abounds in Grace and Goodneſs to us, we have the *greateſt* Encouragement imaginable to engage us to his Service.

3*dly. He was full of Truth.*] From whence I infer, that the *Chriſtian Religion* is a very *plain* and *intelligible* thing. For this, as I have ſhewed you at large, is one of the *great* Notes of Diſtinction between Chriſt's tabernacling among the *Jews* and among *Chriſtians*, that whereas among the *Jews*,

he was *full* of *obſcure* Types and *myſtical* Repreſentations; among us *Chriſtians*, he is *full* of Truth; that is, he is *plain*, and *open*, and *clear*, without any *dark* Reſerves or Myſteries; now he hath plainly revealed that which before he did ſo obſcurely *decypher*; now he hath *unriddled* all thoſe *myſtical* Types, and turned them as it were *inſide outwards*, and given us their *hidden* Senſe and Meaning in *plain* and *naked* Propoſitions; and of theſe our *holy Religion* is compoſed. So that thoſe Doctrines which before were all *Myſtery*, whilſt they lay obſcurely couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, are now brought forth from behind the Curtain into the *open* View of the World, and preſented *barefac'd* to our Underſtandings in the moſt *plain*, and *eaſy*, and *familiar* Senſe: Not but that *Chriſtianity* hath ſome Myſteries in it ſtill, whoſe Depths we are not *able* to fathom; but 'tis not becauſe *Chriſt* hath not revealed them, but becauſe our Underſtandings are *incapable* of comprehending them; ſuch are the Doctrines of the *Holy Trinity*, the *Incarnation* of our *bleſſed Saviour*, and the *Hypoſtatical Union* of the *Divine* and *Humane* Nature in him: Nor indeed is it much to be wonder'd at, that we, who with all our Wit and Reaſon, are not able to explicate

the

the Myſteries of a *Mite* or *Flea*, of a *Plant* or a *Stone*, or any of thoſe *innumerable* things that are before us, ſhould not be able to underſtand ſuch *incomprehenſible*, to order ſuch *infinite*, or define ſuch *ineffable* things; but though we cannot comprehend the *Modes*, nor underſtand the *ſtrict Philoſophy* of them, yet if we would but ſtrip them out of their *falſe* Diſguiſes into their *original* Plainneſs and Simplicity, we might doubtleſs eaſily diſintangle them from all Repugnancy and Contradiction, which is *ſufficient* to render them rationally *credible*, they being contained in that *excellent Religion*, whoſe Truth is demonſtrated by ſuch *abundant* Evidence. But perhaps, as *God* continued all the Doctrines of *Chriſtianity* in a Myſtery among the *Jews*, and reſerved the *clear* Revelation of them to the coming of the *Meſſias*; ſo for the ſame Reaſon he hath ſtill reſerved the *clear* Diſcovery of thoſe Doctrines which are ſtill Myſteries to us *Chriſtians*, for the *future* State, and then it may be we may as fully underſtand *theſe*, as the *believing Jews* (after the Coming of *Chriſt*) did thoſe *other* Doctrines of the *Goſpel*, which before were all Myſteries to them. But, *God* be praiſed, whatſoever is *neceſſary* to make us *good* and *happy*, is now ſo plainly diſcovered to us, that we cannot

be *ignorant* of it unleſs we wilfully ſhut our own Eyes. We need not dive into *myſtical* Senſes, nor *grope* after Truth among *Shadows* and *Umbrages*, as the *good Jews* were fain to do under the *Moſaick Diſpenſation*, all that is *neceſſary* to our Salvation being written as it were upon the very *Surface* of our *Religion*, and openly expoſed to our View in *plain* and *literal* Propoſals. And yet notwithſtanding the *Plainneſs* and *Simplicity* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, there are *too* many, both among *our ſelves*, and in the *Church of Rome*, who have induſtriouſly ſet themſelves to reſolve all its Doctrines again into Darkneſs and *unintelligible* Myſteries, having, inſtead of the *plain* Propoſitions of our *Saviour*, introduced a *new-faſhioned Myſtical Divinity*, made up of nothing but certain *empty* Schemes of *effeminate* Follies and *wild* Enthuſiaſms, which are impoſſible for any Man to underſtand that cannot *conjure* for the Meaning of them. And thoſe Doctrines which our *Saviour* purpoſely delivered in the moſt *plain* and *literal* Senſe, that ſo the *meaneſt* Underſtanding might be inſtructed by them; theſe Men have blown *up* like ſo many Bubbles into *ſwelling* Myſteries, which, being ſtrip't of thoſe *glittering Alluſions*, and *pompous Metaphors*, wherein they are clothed, vaniſh immediately into Air, or ſink

ſink into *flat* and *empty* Nonſenſe. For thus the Doctrine of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Juſtification*, which lye as *plain* in the *Scripture* as Words can make them, are by their Divinity render'd more *obſcure* and *myſterious* than ever they were whilſt they were couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, more of the *true* Nature being diſcovered in *Circumciſion*, and the *legal Waſhings* and Attonements, than in a *hundred* Volumes of *modern Syſtems of Divinity*. For, whatſoever is *intelligible*, they look upon as *carnal*, and till they have ſubtilized it into ſome *unaccountable* Myſtery, it is not *ſpiritual* enough to be admitted into their *Syſtem of Divinity*, as if they thought it below the *Majeſty* of *Religion* to expoſe it ſelf to the View of the World, and there was no Way to ſecure it from Contempt, but to lock it *up* in Myſteries and Obſcurities; for elſe to what Purpoſe ſhould they wrap it round with Clouds as they do, unleſs they deſign to make a Trade of it, and ſo draw a Curtain before it, as Men do before their *Puppet-Plays*, that ſo they may get Money by ſhewing it: For 'tis *apparent* that *Religion* it ſelf ſuffers extremely by it; for whilſt they thus *ſpiritualize* it into Air, and do, as it were, *juggle* it out of Sight in the Clouds of their *myſtical* Nonſenſe,

they render it extreamly *ſuſpicious* to all that are *wiſe* and *inquiſitive*, and will not ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon by the Trains of their *myſterious Gibberiſh*. And as for their more *credulous* Followers, whilſt they thus lead them by the Noſe through a Vally of *Shades* and *Darkneſs*, they utterly deprive them of the *vigorous* Warmth and Comforts of *Religion*; for how ſhould they know how to make uſe of the Arguments and Motives of *Chriſtianity*, when thoſe *excellent* Doctrines from whence they are deduced, are wrap'd in *unintelligible* Myſteries? For how ſhould they draw forth from the Articles of their Faith, thoſe *Practical* Principles that are lodged in them, when thoſe Articles are converted into Riddles, which they do not, nor cannot underſtand? Thus, by turning *Chriſtianity* into a *Myſtery*, they do not only thwart the Deſign of our *Saviour*, which was to bring it forth from under the *myſterious* Repreſentations of the Law, and propoſe it to the World in the moſt *plain* and *intelligible* manner; but they alſo *diſpirit Religion* it ſelf, whoſe Life and Energy conſiſts in being underſtood, and expoſe it to the Contempt and Scorn of thoſe that have Wit enough to detect the Follies of their *Enthuſiaſtical* Myſteries.

4*thly*. And

4thly. And laſtly, *He dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*] From hence I infer the Inexcuſableneſs of thoſe Men that perſiſt in their Diſobedience to the *Goſpel now* that our *bleſſed Lord* hath expreſſed ſo much Grace towards, and ſo clearly made known his Mind and Will to us. What Excuſe can we urge to palliate our *wretched* Diſobedience? If you will but imagine your ſelves for a *little* while to be ſtanding before the Tribunal of your *Saviour*, where e're it be long you muſt all appear, I will briefly draw up what in Probability will be your Plea, and what may be reaſonably preſumed will be his *Anſwer*. 'In the Name of 'Jeſus then let me demand of you, what 'can you plead for your ſelves why that 'fearful Doom which he hath pronounced 'againſt you, ſhould not be paſs'd upon 'you? *Why, Lord, we knew that thou wer't an auſtere Man, that thou would'ſt exact of us to the utmoſt Punctilio, and that if ever we fail'd in the leaſt Circumſtance of our Duty thou would'ſt immediately let looſe thy implacable Vengeance upon us, and this utterly diſheartned us from thy Service conſidering how impoſſible it was for us to pleaſe thee.* 'Ah 'wretched Creatures! can you have the 'Face to charge me with Rigour and Se'verity, who have had ſo many *notorious*

'Experi-

'Experiments of the Sweetneſs of my Nature, and Tenderneſs of my Affections 'towards you? What *one* Action was I ever guilty of in all my Converſation among you that could give you the *leaſt* 'Suſpicion that ever I would prove an *auſtere* Maſter to you, or that I would not 'be ready to conſtrue you in the moſt *favourable* Senſe, and to pity and pardon 'you whereſoever you were excuſable? 'Did I ever give you *any* Occaſion to think 'that I was of a *peeviſh* or *captious* Nature, 'apt to be provoked with Trifles? Yea, 'had you not all the Reaſon in the World 'to conclude from the *Sweetneſs* of my 'Temper that I would be always ready to 'conſider your *Infirmities*, and pity your 'Weakneſſes, and judge you by the Meaſures 'of a Friend? And do you now pretend 'that it was the Dread of my Severity that 'diſheartned you from my Service? *But, Lord, the Laws which thou gaveſt us were ſo intolerably burthenſom that neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear them: We would willingly have obeyed thee if it had been poſſible, but when we ſaw thy Burthen exceeded our Strength, we concluded it was in vain for us to attempt the bearing it.* 'O ungrateful Re-'bels! dare ye accuſe me of Tyranny when 'you know in *your own* Conſciences I never

'impoſed

'impoſed any Law upon you but what had 'a *neceſſary* Tendency to your Happineſs, 'and was ſo far in its *own* Nature from be-'ing a Burthen to you, that it commanded 'nothing but what would have been an 'Eaſe and Refreſhment? And if you can 'but produce any *one* of my Commands 'that obliged you to any thing but to be '*kind* to *your ſelves*, or convince me that I 'could have enjoyned *leſs* upon you with-'out being *leſs kind* or *merciful* to you, I 'will freely admit of your Plea as *juſt*, and 'immediately pardon all your Diſobedien-'ces againſt me. But when all my Laws 'are Inſtances of my Love to you, and Ex-'preſſions of my Zeal for your Welfare, 'who but ſuch *Monſters* of Ingratitude as 'your ſelves would ever have charged me 'with Tyranny and Oppreſſion? *But, Lord, thou knoweſt we are fickle and mutable Creatures; and though we did heartily reſolve that we would never revolt from thy Service, yet through the many Temptations that perpetually ſollicited us, we were at laſt ſeduced into a Rebellion againſt thee: And though when we reflected upon what we had done, we were full of Sorrow and Remorſe, and wiſh'd from our Souls that we had never done it; yet then, being deſperate of Mercy, and paſt all Hopes of Pardon, we concluded that it was too late to repent, or to think*

think of returning to our Duty again. ‘ Ah *unworthy* Wretches! with what Confidence ‘ can you impute the Continuation of your ‘ Rebellion againſt me to your Deſpair of ‘ ever finding Mercy at my hands, when ‘ you know in *your own* Conſciences that I ‘ died to procure Forgiveneſs for you, and ‘ that by my Death I obtained an Act of ‘ *Indemnity* and *Oblivion* for all that would ‘ come in, and return to their Duty upon ‘ the Proclamation of my *Goſpel?* When ‘ you cannot but know that I tender'd you ‘ your Pardon ſealed with *my own* Blood, ‘ and courted you to accept of it; and ‘ though time after time you ſcornfully re- ‘ fuſed and rejected it, yet in hope that at ‘ laſt you might be prevailed with, you ‘ know how long I waited upon you even ‘ till you had tired out my Patience, and I ‘ ſaw there was no Remedy? And do you ‘ now charge your not returning to your ‘ Duty upon your Hopleſneſs of Pardon ‘ for your *former* Rebellions? *'Tis true, Lord, we cannot deny but thou didſt offer us Pardon; but, alas, it was upon an impoſſible Condition, even upon a hearty Repentance, and a thorough Reformation, which thou kneweſt we were not then able to perform. For by a long Cuſtom of Rebellion againſt thee, we had contracted ſo many inveterate evil Habits, which had*

had ſo weaken'd and debilitated our Powers, that we were no more able to reform and amend our ſelves than the Leopard is to change his Spots, or the Æthiopian his Skin: To what Purpoſe then ſhould we attempt Impoſſibilities, or ſet our ſelves to wreſtle with Difficulties which we knew we were never able to ſurmount?

'But pray, how did you know that it was 'impoſſible for you to repent when by all the 'Arguments I uſed with you, I could never 'perſuade you to make Trial of it? You 'know in *your own* Conſciences that there 'are *many* things that you could do; you 'could have betaken your ſelves to a *ſerious* 'Conſideration of the Duties and Motives 'of *Religion*; you could have attended, and 'abſtained at leaſt from the *outward* Acts 'of Sin, and humbly implored my Grace 'and Aſſiſtance; and that to encourage 'you to do this, and what elſe was in your 'Power, I gave you the moſt *ample* Aſſu-'rance in the World that I would *back* and '*enforce* your Endeavours with the Aids of 'my Grace, and in deſpite of all oppoſition 'crown them with Succeſs. So that though 'by your own *ſingle* Strength indeed you 'could never have effected your Repen-'tance, yet it was far from being *impoſſible* 'to you, ſince you knew that by doing what 'was in your power, you ſhould infallibly

'oblige

'oblige me to enable you to do all the reſt. *But, bleſſed Lord, what Encouragement had we to repent and return to our Duty? for if we had done it, we muſt have bid adieu for ever to all thoſe Pleaſures and Delights by which we were invited and detained in the Service of our Luſts; and Thou offered'ſt us nothing in exchange for them, but only Sighs and Tears, with other ungrateful Rigours of a bitter and ſevere Repentance. How then canſt thou blame our Diſobedience againſt thee, when we had ſo many inviting Temptations to it, and ſo little Encouragement to the contrary?* 'O *prodigious* 'Impudence! with what Face can you aſ-'ſert ſuch a *notorious* Falſhood when you 'know in *your own* Conſciences that beſides 'all thoſe Pleaſures that are *connatural* to 'my Service, and which do vaſtly exceed 'all the Pleaſures of Sin, I laid an *immortal* 'Crown at your Feet, and faithfully pro-'miſed you that if you would but ſpend a 'ſhort Life in my Service, I would at the 'End of it receive you into that *bliſsful* 'State where you ſhould be *happy* beyond 'all your Wiſhes, and to the *utmoſt* Capaci-'ty of your Nature; where you ſhould 'live with *God* and *Angels* in the moſt *rap-'turous* Exerciſe of *everlaſting* Love and 'Joy, which one would have thought had 'been *ſufficient* to recompence you for thoſe

'*ſilly*

'*ſilly* Pleaſures for whoſe ſake you deſerted
'me and my Service. But ſince you have
'trampled upon all my Offers, and would
'by no means be perſwaded by all thoſe
'*mighty* Tenders I have made you, Go ye
'deſervedly curſed into ever---- *Hold, Lord, we beſeech thee, and before thou paſſeſt thy irrevocable Doom upon us, hear this laſt Petition we ſhall make for our ſelves: We now confeſs that we are fully convinc'd (and O that we had underſtood it ſooner!) what infinite Reaſon we had to adhere to thee and thy Service. It is our Miſery that theſe things were not ſooner diſcover'd to us, or at leaſt that they were not ſo clearly diſcovered as to convince and perſwade us. Had we but known what we now know, we would never have deſerted thee as we did; and therefore we beſeech thee have Pity upon our Ignorance, and impute not to our Wills the Faults of our Underſtandings, which are not in our Power to remedy.* 'Why, is this the *utmoſt* that
'you can plead for *your* ſelves? Have I not
'told you all theſe things before-hand as
'plainly as Words could expreſs them?
'Have I not inſtituted an Order of Men in
'my *Church* to explain theſe things to you,
'and to put you in mind of them? So that
'whatever you pretend, you could not but
'know and underſtand them; or if you did
'not, it was becauſe you would not. And

'if

'if you would wilfully ſhut your Eyes a-
'gainſt the Light, it was *your own* Fault
'that you did not ſee, and you may thank
'*your ſelves* for the Conſequents of it. I
'plainly told you where your Wickedneſs
'would end, and unleſs you were wilfully
'*blind* you could not but ſee what the Event
'of your Sin would prove, even while you
'were committing it; and you know in
'*your own* Conſciences that this *fearful*
'Doom, which now you deprecate, you
'were fairly warned of when you might
'have eaſily avoided it by a *timely* Submiſ-
'ſion but you would not. And ſeeing you
'would be ſo *mad* as to reject *Heaven* when
'it lay before you, and leap into *Hell* with
'your Eyes open, your Blood be upon *your*
'*own* Heads. For I have tried all the Arts
'of Love, and Methods of Kindneſs to re-
'claim you; and ſince you have render'd
'them all *ineffectual*, what remains but that
'you depart from me, like *accurſed* Wret-
'ches as you are, into that *everlaſting* Fire pre-
'pared for the *Devil* and his *Angels*.

And now, I beſeech you, do not *your own* Conſciences conſent to the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of this Procedure? Is there any *tolerable* Plea you can urge at the Judgment-Seat of *Jeſus Chriſt* which here hath not been fully anſwered? And if ſo, how *inexcuſable*

ble ſhall we be when we come to plead *our own* Cauſe in the *great* Aſſembly of Spirits? For when theſe Aggravations of our Diſobedience ſhall be laid open, our Guilt will appear ſo *foul* and *monſtrous* that we ſhall doubtleſs be condemned by the *unanimous* Vote of all the *Reaſonable* World; and as ſoon as the *great* Judge hath paſs'd his Sentence upon us, *our own* Conſciences will be forc'd to eccho, *Juſt and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways.* Wherefore as we would not be found inexcuſably *guilty* when we come to plead for our Lives before the Tribunal of our *Saviour*, let us all be perſwaded to return to his Service, and faithfully to continue in it, that ſo inſtead of *Go ye curſed*, we may hear from his Mouth that *welcome* Approbation, *Well done good and profitable Servants, enter into the Joy of your Maſter.*

III. I come now to the *laſt* Propoſition in the Text, *viz. And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Son of the Father.* In handling of which I ſhall do theſe two Things:

1. Explain to you what this Glory of the *Word* was which the *Apoſtle* tells us they beheld.

2. Shew you that it was *the Glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.*

1. What was that Glory of the *Word*, which the *Apoſtle* tells us they beheld? I anſwer in general, By this *Glory* here muſt be underſtood ſomething that is *reſemblant* to the Glory of his dwelling in the Tabernacle; becauſe, as I have already ſhewed you, the *Apoſtle* ſeems plainly to refer to it, in that he doth not only tell us that the *Word* tabernacled among *us*, which alludes to his Tabernacling among the *Jews*; but he alſo tells us, that they ſaw his Glory, which alludes to that Glory of the Lord which the *Jews* beheld in that *ancient* Tabernacle. Since therefore the *Apoſtle* mentions this Glory of the *Word Incarnate*, by way of Alluſion to the Glory of his *Divine Preſence* in the Tabernacle, it muſt neceſſarily bear ſome Reſemblance or Proportion to it; becauſe elſe it would be no *proper* Alluſion. The beſt Way therefore for us to diſcover what this Glory of *Chriſt* was which they beheld, is to conſider wherein the Glory of the *Divine Preſence* in the Tabernacle did chiefly diſcover it ſelf; and that, you ſhall find was in theſe four Things: *Firſt*, In a *bright* and *luminous* Appearance. *Secondly*, In exerting of an

extra-

extraordinary Power. *Thirdly*, In giving Laws and Oracles. *Fourthly*, In *ſenſible* Significations of its own *immaculate* Sanctity and Purity. And in Proportion and Correſpondence to theſe, the Glory of the *Word Incarnate* alſo muſt conſiſt in theſe four Things:

1*ſt*. In the *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs with which his Perſon was arrayed at his *Baptiſm*, and more eſpecially at his *Tranſfiguration*.

2*dly*. In thoſe *great* and *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought in the Courſe of his Miniſtry.

3*dly*. In the *incomparable* Purity and Goodneſs of his Life.

4*thly*. In the *ſurpaſſing* Excellency, and Divinity of his Doctrine.

1*ſt*. That Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* and the *Apoſtles* beheld, conſiſted in that *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs with which his Perſon was arrayed at his *Baptiſm*, and more eſpecially at his *Transfiguration*; in Reſemblance to that *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs in which he appeared in the *Moſaick Tabernacle*, where it is frequently ſaid that the Glory of the Lord abode and appeared; as you may ſee *Exod.* 24. 16. &

40. 34. Which Glory it's evident diſcovered its ſelf in an *extraordinary viſible* Splendor that ſhone forth from between the *Cherubims*, and diffuſed it ſelf thence all over that *ſacred* Habitation. And accordingly in *Ezek.* 43. 2. it is ſaid, that *the Glory of the God of Iſrael came from the Way of the Eaſt, and the Earth ſhone with his Glory*; which denotes that it was *extraordinary bright* and *luminous* ſince the Earth ſhone with the very Reflection of it. And in this ſame *glorious* Splendor was *Chriſt* arrayed *firſt* at his *Baptiſm*, and *afterwards* at his *Transfiguration*. For at his Baptiſm it is ſaid, that *the Heavens were open'd unto him*, and that *he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a Dove, and lighting upon him*, *Matth.* 3. 16. where by the *Holy Ghoſt's* deſcending like a Dove, it is not neceſſary we ſhould underſtand his deſcending in the Shape or Form of a Dove, but that in ſome *glorious* Form or Appearance he deſcended in the *ſame* manner as a Dove deſcends; and therefore St. *Luke* expreſſes it thus, *And the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily Shape like a Dove upon him*, *Luke* 3. 22. that is, he deſcended in ſome very *glorious* and *viſible* Appearance, in the ſame Manner as Doves are wont to deſcend when they come down from the Skies, and pitch upon the Earth. But what that Shape was in which

which he appeared, is not here expreſſed; but that which ſeems to be moſt *probable* is this, that the *Holy Ghoſt* aſſuming a Body of Light, or ſurrounded as it were with a Guard of Angels appearing in *luminous* Forms, came down from *above* juſt as a Dove with his Wings ſpread forth is obſerved to do, and lighted upon our Saviour's Head; and the Reaſon why I think ſo, is this, both becauſe where-ever any mention is made of God's, or the Holy Ghoſt's appearing in an *indefinite* Form, it is always in a Body of Light and *viſible* Splendor, of which I have given you ſundry Inſtances; and alſo becauſe it ſeems to have been a very *early* Tradition in the *Church* that it was in a very *glorious* Appearance of Light that the *Holy Ghoſt* came down upon our *Saviour*: And therefore in the *Goſpel of the Nazarens*, as *Grotius* obſerves, it's ſaid that upon the Holy Ghoſt's Deſcent, ἐυθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μεγὰ, *immediately a great Light ſhone round about the Place*; and *Juſtin Martyr*, ſpeaking of our Saviour's Baptiſm, ſaith expreſly, πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, *that there was a Fire lighted in the River Jordan*; that is, the Water, immediately after he was baptized in it, ſeemed to be all on fire by the Reflection of that *bright* and *flaming* Appearance in which the *Holy Ghoſt* de-

ſcended upon him; ſo that while he wore this Crown of *viſible* Light, his Head, as the Painters are wont to expreſs it, was circled round with the Rays of that Glory in which he was wont to appear from between the Cherubims. And this Glory of his was queſtionleſs ſeen by many of the *Apoſtles*, who were *ſundry* of them Diſciples to *John the Baptiſt*, and ſo may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be preſent at the Baptiſm of our *Saviour*.

And as for his *Tranſfiguration* upon Mount *Tabor*, it is ſaid, that upon it *his Face did ſhine as the Sun, and that his Raiment was white as the Light*; or as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτῦ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων; that is, his Raiment was like the Whiteneſs of a Flaſh of Lightning, *Luke* 9. 29. So that from Head to Foot he was all inrobed in a *viſible* Glory, and covered with all that Brightneſs, and *dazling* Splendor in which he was wont to appear in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. And accordingly you have mention made of a Cloud that over-ſhadowed the *three Diſciples*, whilſt *Jeſus* remained in his Tranſfiguration, which is exactly agreeable with that Cloud that covered the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, whilſt the Glory of the Lord filled it, as you may ſee *Exod.* 40. 34. And that this *glorious* Tranſfiguration was a Part of that Glory

Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* here ſays they beheld, is evident, becauſe *himſelf* was one of the *three Diſciples* that were Eye-Witneſſes of this *glorious* Scene, and it is expreſly ſaid of him and his Brethren, that they *ſaw his Glory, and the two Men that ſtood with him*, *Luke* 9. 32.

2*dly*. This Glory which they ſaw conſiſted in thoſe *great* and *ſtupendous* Miracles that He wrought in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, in Proportion to that *extraordinary* Power in which the Glory of the *Divine Preſence* diſcovered it ſelf in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. For thus we find that it was from the Tabernacle that God exerted all that *miraculous* Power by which he puniſhed the Rebellions of the *Jews*, and wrought thoſe *miraculous* Deliverances for them. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he commanded the Earth to open, and ſwallow up *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and that he ſent forth that *devouring* Fire which conſumed their *Two hundred* and *fifty* Accomplices. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he ſmote the *falſe* Spies with the Plague, and ſent forth an Army of *fiery* Serpents to deſtroy the *murmuring* Iſraelites. 'Twas by his Preſence in the Tabernacle that he conducted them through the Wilderneſs, and drave their Enemies before them; that he divided the River *Jordan* to

open them a Paſſage into *Canaan*, and made the Walls of *Jericho* to fall flat at the Blaſts of a few *Rams-horns*. And upon the Account of this *Miraculous* Power which he exerted from the Tabernacle, the Ark that was contained in it, and was the *ſpecial* Seat of his Preſence, is called *the Ark of his ſtrength*, *Pſ.* 132. 8. and God is ſaid to *ſend them help from his Sanctuary, and to ſtrengthen them out of Sion*, where the Ark was repoſited in the Sanctuary of the Temple, *Pſ.* 20. 2. Thus alſo thoſe Words are to be underſtood, *Pſ.* 80. 2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manaſſeh, ſtir up thy ſtrength, and come and help us*; becauſe the Ark, from whence God was wont to put forth his Strength in ſaving of *that* People, marched immediately before theſe *three* Tribes. And this was very well underſtood both by the *Iſraelites* and the *Philiſtines*; for when the *Philiſtines* had overthrown them, they deſired that the Ark of the Lord might be fetched out of *Shiloh*, that ſo when it came among them it might ſave them out of the Hands of their Enemies, 1 *Sam.* 4. 3. And when the *Philiſtines* underſtood that the Ark was brought into their Camp, they were ſore afraid, and cryed out, *God is come into the Camp: Wo unto us; who ſhall deliver us out of the hands of theſe mighty Gods? Theſe are the Gods that ſmote the Egyptians*

ans with all the Plagues in the Wilderneſs, v. 7, 8. From whence it is evident that they both look'd upon the Tabernacle as the Seat of God's *miraculous* Power, and this *miraculous* Power is called the Glory of God; for thus when the Ark was taken by the *Philiſtines*, it is ſaid that God *delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies hand, Pſ.* 78. 61. and his Glory, and the Miracles that he wrought from the Tabernacle in the Wilderneſs, are mentioned as *Synonimous* Terms, *Numb.* 14. 22. *Becauſe all theſe Men have ſeen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the Wilderneſs*, &c. So that it's evident, that he exerted his *miraculous* Power from the Tabernacle, and that this *miraculous* Power was his Glory.

And conſonantly hereunto it was from the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature wherein he dwelt, that the *Eternal Word* exerted that *miraculous* Power whereby he *cured* the *Sick*, *calmed* the Sea, and *raiſed* the Dead, *vanquiſhed* the Devils, and wrought all his *miraculous* Works, which were ſo *many* and ſo *great* that they raviſhed his Friends with Joy to behold them, and ſtruck Terror and Amazement into his Enemies; for ſo it is ſaid, that *they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God* that was in him, *Luke* 9. 43.

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And that when they ſaw how the Devils trembled, and fled before him, *they marvelled*, ſaying, *It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael*, *Matth.* 9. 33. So that by their *own* Confeſſion, that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature did far exceed that *miraculous* Power which he exerciſed in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*. And this *miraculous* Power of his is alſo expreſly called *his Glory*, *Joh.* 2. 11. *This beginning of Miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and manifeſted forth his Glory, and his Diſciples believed on him.* So that as his *miraculous* Power was called his Glory when he tabernacled among the *Jews*, ſo it was alſo when he tabernacled in *Humane* Nature, and ſo by conſequence this alſo was a Part of that Glory of his which his *Apoſtles* ſaw while he dwelt among them.

3*dly*. This Glory which they ſaw conſiſted alſo in the *ſurpaſſing* Excellency and Divinity of his Doctrine, agreeably to that Expreſſion of his *glorious* Preſence in the *Old* abernacle, *viz.* his giving Laws and Oracles to the *Iſraelites*. For thus we find that God told *Moſes*, that he would *meet him in the Tabernacle, and commune with him of all things, which he would give him in Commandment to the Children of Iſrael*, *Exod.* 25. 22. And, *Numb.* 7. 89. you have the manner of

of his Communing with them deſcribed; for *when Moſes*, ſaith he, *went into the Tabernacle, he heard the Voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat that was upon the Ark, from between the two Cherubims.* For Chriſt, as I have formerly ſhewed you, being the *civil* Prince or Sovereign of the *Jews*, the *Cherubims* were the Throne upon which he ſat, and from whence he gave Laws and Directions for the Adminiſtration of the Affairs of his Kingdom: And accordingly he is ſaid to *dwell between the Cherubims*, *Pſ.* 99. 1. and *to ride upon the Cherubims*, 2 *Sam.*22.11. and the Sanctuary wherein the *Cherubims* were ſeated, is expreſly called *the Throne of the Lord*, *Jerem.* 17. 12. becauſe here it was that he ſat in all his Majeſty, and gave forth his Laws and Ordinances to the Kingdom of *Iſrael*. And this was an *eminent* Expreſſion of the Glory of his Preſence among them, becauſe hereby he aſſerted his Sovereign Authority, and did publickly challenge to himſelf that Right to his *glorious* Power which from all *Eternity* was *inherent* in him. And hence the *Apoſtle* calls the giving thoſe Divine Laws and Oracles a *glorious Miniſtration*, and plainly aſſerts it to be an Inſtance of the Glory of the *Divine Shechinah*, or Preſence in the Tabernacle, when he grants that *the Miniſtration of Death written*

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ten and engraven in ſtone, was glorious, yea and that Miniſtration to be Glory in the Abſtract, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, 9.

And in Correſpondence hereunto did the *Divine Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, give forth *Divine* Laws and Oracles to the World; all which are yet remaining among us, and do contain in them the Subſtance of our *Holy Religion*; which being ſo *divine* and *godlike*, and altogether compoſed of the *pureſt* Laws, and moſt *Heavenly* Doctrines, is a moſt *proper* Inſtance of that Glory of the *Eternal Word* which the Apoſtles beheld, tho' not with the Eyes of their Bodies, yet with thoſe of their Minds. For what can be more *glorious* in the Eye of *Reaſon* than thoſe *illuſtrious* Diſcoveries which he hath made to us in his *Goſpel* of the *Nature* of *God*, and the *Duty* of *Man*, and the *immortal* Recompences of the World to come, in which he hath ſo far exceeded whatſoever *Humane* Wiſdom was able to diſcover of them, that all the *Philoſophy* that ever was *before* him muſt confeſs it ſelf eclipſed and out-ſhone by him, and all the *Philoſophy* that ever *ſucceeded* him, hath been forced to derive and borrow Light from him: And accordingly we find his *Goſpel*, in which his Doctrines are contained, ſtiled by the Name of *the glorious Goſpel*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4.

4. 4. which in Compariſon with thoſe *dark* and *confuſed* Diſcoveries which the World had formerly made, the *Apoſtle* reſembles to the firſt breaking forth of the Light out of the *rude* and *obſcure Chaos*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. *For God*, ſaith he, *who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath ſhined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt:* where, by the *Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, the Apoſtle ſeems plainly to allude to that *Divine* Glory and Luſter with which *Moſes*'s Face ſhone when he came down from ſeeing the Glory of *God*, *Exod.* 33. 29. So that his Meaning is this, that as the *Children of Iſrael* with their *bodily* Eyes ſaw the Glory of *God* ſhining upon the Face of *Moſes*, ſo *they*, the *Diſciples* and *Apoſtles* of our *Saviour*, had far more clearly beheld with the Eyes of their Minds the *Divine* Glory diſplayed in his Doctrine and Miniſtry.

4*thly*. And laſtly, This Glory of the *Eternal Word* which they ſaw, conſiſted alſo in the *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life, ſemblably to that Expreſſion of his *glorious* Preſence in the *Old* Tabernacle, *viz.* the *ſenſible* Significations he gave of the *immaculate* Purity and Holineſs of his Nature. For by thoſe *outward* Cleanſings of all Things and Perſons that did any ways belong to the Taber-

Tabernacle, or did at any time approach it, he did openly repreſent and ſignify the Purity and Sanctity of his *own* Nature, which being infinitely *ſeparated* from all manner of *Impurity* and *Uncleanneſs*, cannot endure that any thing that is *filthy* or *impure* ſhould approach it. For thus we read that the Tabernacle it ſelf, and all the *Utenſils* of it, were to be *purified* and *ſanctified* with Oyl before the Entrance of the *Shechinah*, or *Divine Preſence*: So alſo the *High Prieſt*, the Prieſts, and the People were to be cleanſed and purified before they were ſuffered to approach the *Holy Habitation*; and if at any time they had contracted any of thoſe *legal* Uncleanneſſes that are ſpecified in the Law of *Moſes*, they were to be excluded from the Communion of the Congregation, and from all the Exerciſes of *Publick Worſhip* and Devotion, till they were cleanſed and purified again: The Intent of all which was to ſignify to that People how *irreconcilable* his Nature was to all Impurity and Wickedneſs, that it could not admit of the Neighbourhood of any Evil, nor dwell within any Lines of Communication with it; for this is expreſſed in the very Reaſon why theſe *Legal Purifications* are ſo ſtrictly required: *For I the Lord your God, am holy, Levit.* 19. 2. *For I the Lord which ſanctify you, am holy, Levit.* 21. 8. Plainly intimating that

that the Intent and Reaſon of all thoſe *Ceremonial* Purifications, was to ſignify to that *dull* and *ſtupid* People the *immaculate* Holineſs and Purity of his *own* Nature, which is ſo infinitely removed from any thing that is *impure* and *unholy*, that he could neither communicate with, nor endure the Approaches of it. And in this 'tis evident he placed a great Part of the Glory of his *Majeſtatical Preſence* in the Tabernacle, ſince a great part of that *Religion* which he there inſtituted was intended to ſignify the Glory of his Holineſs to them; and accordingly he is deſcribed to be *glorious in Holineſs*, *Exod.* 15. 11.

And agreeably hereunto did the *Eternal Word*, when he tabernacled in *our* Natures, ſignify to the World the *unſpotted* Purity of *his* Nature by that *incomparable* Example of Holineſs which he gave in his Life and Converſation among us. For whereas before he expreſs'd his Holineſs by *Myſtical* Types and *Ceremonial* Obſervances, he hath now ſignified it by a Life *full* of Virtue and Goodneſs, and a Converſation exactly *conformable* to the *eternal* Rules of Righteouſneſs. For, as a Creature in reſpect of his *Humanity*, he never failed in the *leaſt* Punctilio of that *Duty*, *Homage*, and *Devotion* which he owed to the moſt *High God* his Creator; as a Man, he never

never ſwerved either in his Paſſions or Appetites from the *ſtricteſt* Rules of *Sobriety* and *Temperance*; as a Member of *Humane Society*, he never was guilty of an *unrighteous* Action either towards his *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or *Equals*; but all his Life was a *walking* Monument of Goodneſs, and his whole Converſation a moſt *perfect* Tranſcript of thoſe *Divine* and *Heavenly* Laws which he gave to the World. So that he was all *glorious without* as well as *within*, his Practice being a *living* Comment and Paraphraſe upon that *immaculate* Purity and Holineſs which is the Glory of his *Divine* Nature. This therefore was doubtleſs a Part of that Glory which the Apoſtles beheld in the *Eternal Word*, even that *immaculate* Sanctity and Holineſs of which he gave ſo many *glorious* Significations in the whole Courſe of his Converſation: And accordingly we find this his Purity and Holineſs deſcribed by the Name of *the Glory of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:* Where it's plain that by *the Glory of the Lord*, muſt be meant his Holineſs; becauſe it is into the Image of *that* that we are transformed. So that the meaning of the

the Words is this, we all beholding the Holineſs of *Chriſt*, which is his Glory, in the Glaſs of his Doctrine and *incomparable* Example, are transformed into the Likeneſs of it; and do gradually paſs on from *one* Degree of this Glory of his Holineſs to *another*, under the Conduct and Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit of Chriſt*.

And ſo I have done with the *firſt* thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you what that Glory of *Chriſt* was which the *Apoſtle* here tells us they beheld.

2. I now proceed to the *ſecond* Branch of my Diſcourſe, which was to ſhew you that this was the Glory as of the *only begotten Son of the Father*: But before we proceed to the Proof of it, it will be *neceſſary* to explain this Phraſe, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς *the Glory as of the only begotten Son.* Which Word, ὡς, or *as*, is in *Scripture* taken *two* Ways, ſometimes as a Note of *Similitude* or *Compariſon*; ſo *Mat.* 6. 10, *Thy Will be done in Earth,* ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ, *as it is in Heaven*; that is, like as it is in *Heaven*; and if we take it in this Senſe, then the Meaning of the Words muſt be this, *And we beheld his Glory which was like unto the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*; that is, like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son was wont to

appear when he dwelt in the Tabernacle, and converſed with the *ancient Patriarchs*. And in this Senſe I have ſhewed you already how it was *as* the Glory of the *only begotten Son*, by ſhewing you the *great* Agreement and Similitude there was between the Glory of *Chriſt* when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature. And when I conſider how plainly this Text doth allude to the *Shechinah* or *Divine Preſence* of the *Word* in that *ancient* Tabernacle, I am very much induced to think that we ought not to exclude this Senſe of it, namely, that as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, *like* as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*; ſo that Glory of his which they beheld in the Tabernacle of *our* Nature, was like unto that Glory in which he appeared in the *ancient* Tabernacle.

But then this Word ὡς, is ſometimes alſo taken for a Note of *Confirmation*. So *Pſal.* 73. 1. ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ θεὸς, *Truly God is good to* Iſrael. And thus St. *Chryſoſtome* underſtands it here, ὡς οὐκ ὁμοιώσεως δεῖν ἀλλὰ βεβαιώσεως, &c. *It is not a Note of Similitude and Compariſon, but of Confirmation and unqueſtionable Diſtinction*; as if the *Evangeliſt* had ſaid, we ſaw his Glory, ſuch as *became* and was *fit* for the *only begotten* and truly *natural*

Son

Son of God. For my Part, I ſee no Reaſon why the Words may not be fairly underſtood in *both* Senſes, ſince they are no Ways *oppoſite* to, nor *inconſiſtent* with *one another*; and if ſo, then this muſt be the Meaning of the Words; *We beheld his Glory which was like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son appeared in the old Tabernacle, and which was ſuch as was every Way becoming the only begotten Son to appear in.* The *firſt* of which Senſes I have proved to you already, that the Glory of *Chriſt* in the Tabernacle of *our* Natures was *like* unto his Glory in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*; and therefore now I ſhall only prove the *ſecond*, that it was ſuch as *became* and was every Way *worthy* of the *only begotten Son of the Father*; and this I doubt not will plainly appear by conſidering the *ſeveral* Particulars of it.

1*ſt.* That *viſible* Splendor and Brightneſs in which he appeared at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*, was ſuch as *became* him, and was *worthy* of him. For in all Probability, that Splendor conſiſted of *Angelical Beings*, clothed in *bright* and *luminous* Bodies; becauſe, as I have formerly proved to you, that Brightneſs in which he appeared upon the *Mount*, and which he diſplayed from between the *Cherubims*, was nothing elſe but thoſe *Angels of Light*, or *miniſtring*

Spirits which he made to appear as Flames of Fire round about him; and therefore that Train of Angels whom *Eſay* ſaw filling the Temple, *Eſay* 6. 1. our *Saviour* calls the *Glory of the Lord*, Jo. 12. 41. that is, that *viſible* Glory in which the Lord appear'd from between the *Cherubims*. And if that *viſible* Glory conſiſted in a Train of *Angels* appearing in *glorious* Forms, then there is no doubt but that *viſible* Glory of our *Saviour* at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration* was the ſame; ſince, as I have already ſhewed you, it is deſcribed by the *ſame* Name, and in the *ſame* Manner of Appearance; and if ſo, how well did it become the *only begotten Son* to be ſurrounded with the *illuſtrious* Guards of his Father's Court, and attended on with thoſe *high-born* Spirits, whoſe Office it is to miniſter before the Throne of the moſt *High?* For never was the moſt *glorious* Potentate upon Earth, attended with ſuch a *ſplendid* Train and Retinue, the *meaneſt* of which was far more *illuſtrious* than the *greateſt* and moſt *high-born* Monarch in the World. So that as the moſt *High God* did, by a Voice from *Heaven*, both at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*, declare him to be his *beloved* Son; ſo by the *glorious* Train of Attendants he ſent him, he manifeſted the Truth of his De-

Declaration; for we muſt needs ſuppoſe him to be the Son of the moſt *High*, when we ſee the moſt *glorious* Beings in all the Creation, ſo willingly ſubmit themſelves to his Service and Attendance: And when we ſee the moſt *High* adorning his *Outſide* with the *luminous* Bodies of Angels, we may reaſonably conclude that there was a *Divinity within*, and that the *Jewel* was *God*, becauſe the *Caſket* was *Angels*. But whatſoever this *glorious* Splendor was in which he was clothed at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*, it was apparently ſuch as very well *became* the *only begotten Son*, not only becauſe, as the *Philoſopher* ſaith, that if *God* would ever take upon him a Body, it would be certainly Light, which is a Veſtment moſt *ſuitable* to his Glory and Majeſty; but alſo becauſe that *miraculous* Splendor was an *infallible* Token of the Preſence of the *Divinity* in him; for it never was but where God was preſent; and therefore it is called the Glory of God, it being the *inſeparable* Concomitant of his more *peculiar* Reſidence. For thus, as I have ſhewed you upon the *Mount* and in the *Tabernacle*, it was a *viſible* Demonſtration of the *ſpecial* Preſence of the *inviſible* God, and whereſoever in all the *Old Teſtament*, any Mention is made of its Appearance,

you ſhall find that there *God* himſelf did peculiarly reſide: And therefore it is not to be imagined that *God* would have communicated to our *Saviour*, this *inſeparable* Token of his *own* Preſence, unleſs the *Divinity* had reſided in him. For *Jeſus Chriſt* was the only Perſon upon whom this *viſible* Glory deſcended; never did the Hand of *Heaven* put ſuch a Robe and Diadem of Glory upon any Perſon in the World, as this which our Saviour wore at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*, which plainly denotes that he was the only Perſon in whom the *Divinity* was *ſubſtantially* united, and did *eſſentially* dwell. So that as this *viſible* Glory was a *certain* Token of God's *peculiar* Reſidence in the Tabernacle and Temple, ſo it was alſo of his *ſpecial* Preſence in *Chriſt*; for the Hiſtory of his *Baptiſm* tells us, that it did not only make a *tranſient* Appearance, but that it remained on him, ſignifying that the *Divinity*, whoſe Preſence was denoted by it, had made him his Habitation and Place of *conſtant* Abode. For though that *viſible* Glory after ſome Time diſappeared and went *off* from him, yet the Thing ſignified by it, *viz.* the *Divine Preſence*, always remained in him; for by that *outward* Glory he was clearly manifeſted to be the *Holy One of God*, the Tabernacle and Sanctuary

Sanctuary in which God was, and where he had taken up his Reſidence *for ever*, that his *Humane* Nature was that *ſacred* Temple where the *Divinity* intended to dwell, and from whence for the *future* he would deliver all his Oracles, and communicate all his Bleſſings to Mankind. So that in this Reſpect this *viſible* Glory was ſuch as highly *became* the *only begotten Son*, becauſe it plainly denoted that the Fulneſs of the *God-head* dwelt *bodily* in him, and had choſen him for his Habitation for ever; and therefore *John Baptiſt* tells us, that though he knew him not, yet this *God* had revealed to him, *Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. And I ſaw and bear Record that this was the Son of God*, Joh. 1. 33, 34. where you may obſerve, that though it was revealed to him only that he was the Perſon that ſhould baptize with the *Holy Ghoſt*, upon whom the Spirit deſcended, yet he bare Record alſo that this Perſon was the *Son of God*, rationally concluding that this *viſible* Glory, which was ſuch an *infallible* Token of the *ſpecial* Preſence of the *Divinity*, was never to be communicated to any but the *Son of God*. And it is very obſervable, that at both theſe Times, when our *Saviour* was array-

ed in this *glorious* Splendor, he is declared by a Voice from *Heaven* to be the Son of God, it being the *Father's* Intention at once to manifeſt him to be his *Son* both by *Word* and *Deed*; and at the ſame time, when he declared him to be his Son, to array him in ſuch a Glory as *became* the Dignity of his Perſon.

2*dly*. The *great* and *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought were ſuch as *became* his *only begotten Son*. 'Tis true, it cannot be denied but ſeveral Miracles have been wrought by *meer* Men, they being authorized by *God*, and aſſiſted by his *Almighty* Power; but ſo *many* and ſo *great* as our *Saviour* wrought were never performed by any Mortal. For as to the Number of them, they were more than ever were wrought by *Moſes* and all the *Prophets* together; for, beſides thoſe that are recorded, which were all performed within the Space of *four* Years at moſt, St. *John* tells us, that he wrought ſo many that the World could not contain the Records of them, *Joh.* 21. 25. which though it be an *Hyperbolical* Expreſſion, yet denotes thus much at leaſt, that the Number of them was ſo *great* that they were almoſt *innumerable*. And as to the Greatneſs of them, they did apparently exceed all that ever were wrought before in the World. For he did

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not only raiſe the Dead, but he raiſed *himſelf* alſo after he had been *barbarouſly* murdered by his Enemies. He made the *Winds* and *Sea* obey him, and with the Word of his Mouth vanquiſhed the *Devils*, and drave them from their Habitations, and forc'd them againſt their Wills, and their Intereſt to acknowledge him to be the Son of God. And whereas the Miracles of *Moſes* and the *Prophets* were moſt of them *noxious*, they being Acts of *Divine* Vengeance upon the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, and conſequently more apt to terrify than to oblige thoſe that beheld them; the Miracles of our *Saviour* were all of them Expreſſions of his *unfeigned* Love and Good-Will to the World. For among all that *vaſt* Number of *wondrous* Works that he wrought, there is not *one* to be found by which any Man was ever prejudiced, unleſs it was his diſmiſſing the Devils into the Swine of the *Gadarens*, which without all doubt he did in Kindneſs and Good-will to the Owners; who being ſo *cruel* to themſelves as to prefer their Swine before their *Saviour*, it was *great* Charity and Mercy to deprive them of that which was ſo *apparent* a Hindrance to their Enjoyment of a far *greater* Good. So that all his *wondrous* Works were nothing but Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence; for he went about doing

doing Good, *curing* all that were *poſſeſſed* with the Devil, and *healing* all manner of Diſeaſes. And whereas none of thoſe that wrought Miracles before him could ever pretend to perform them by any *immanent* Power of their own, but had only a *tranſient* Power given them for the *preſent* Miracle, which they either obtained from *God* upon their Prayers and Supplications, or was given by *God* for the Execution of his *own* Will and Command; the *bleſſed Jeſus* had this Power ſubjected and abiding in him, ſo that he could exert it *when*, and *where*, and as *often* as he pleaſed; and whether he were *abſent* or *preſent*, with the Word of his Mouth he could do what he would; yea, and many times he performed his *wondrous* Works without any Word or Sign intervening, even by a *ſilent* Virtue proceeding from that *miraculous* Power with which he was endued; and of all his Miracles there is only *one* which he performed upon Prayer and Supplication to his Father, and that was his raiſing *Lazarus* from the Dead, the Reaſon of which he himſelf gives, *Joh.* 11. 42. *Becauſe of the People which ſtand by, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me:* Intimating that he did not offer up this Prayer to his Father with deſign to obtain of him any *new* Power of working Miracles,

cles, which he was already endued with in an *abundant* meaſure; but that hereby I might ſignify to the People how *acceptable* I am to thee, and let them ſee that I do all my Works in thy Name. And that he had this Power, is evident in that he did ſo plentifully communicate it to his *Apoſtles* and Followers, which neither *Moſes* nor the *Prophets* were ever able to do. For thus, *Luke* 10. 19. he expreſly tells his *Seventy* Diſciples, *Behold, I give you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions*; and ſo alſo when he diſmiſſed his *Twelve* Apoſtles into *Judea*, *Matth.* 10. 8. he bids them, *Go, heal the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers, raiſe the Dead, caſt out Devils*; for *freely ye have received*, ſaith he, and therefore *freely give*. From all which it is apparent how far the *miraculous* Works of our *Saviour* did exceed all thoſe that ever were done before him; and being ſo *great* and *excellent*, ſo far *tranſcending* all that ever was done by any Mortal, they plainly demonſtrated him to be the *Son of God*, and very well became the Dignity of his Perſon. For how could he have done all theſe *mighty* Things by a Power *immanent* in himſelf, had he not been the *Son* of an *Omnipotent Father?* And in what more *becoming* Way could he have expreſſed that *Omnipotent* Power which he derived from his

his Father, than in thoſe *aſtoniſhing* Miracles of Love which he wrought in the World?

3dly. The *excellent* and *divine* Doctrine which he taught was ſuch as *became* the *only begotten Son.* For certainly if we conſider the *excellent* Frame and Contrivance of the *Chriſtian Religion*, we cannot but confeſs it to be moſt *Divine* and *Godlike*, moſt *worthy* of that *infinite* Wiſdom and Goodneſs from whence it was derived. For *Religion* in general is the means of advancing *Rational Beings* to that Perfection and Happineſs for which the *great* Creator hath deſigned and intended them; and certainly never was there any *Religion* in the World more adapted to advance this *noble* Deſign of *God* than that which our *Saviour* hath taught: For as for its *Agenda*, what it requires to be done, they all conſiſt in acting reaſonably, and according to the Dignity of our Nature, in *thinking*, *ſpeaking*, and *practiſing*; in *loving* and *hating*, *deſiring* and *delighting*, *hoping* and *fearing*, as becomes *Reaſonable Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumſtances; and do require nothing of us but that we ſhould regulate our Practice by the Rules of *Right* Reaſon, and direct all our Faculties and Affections to their *proper* Ends and Objects; and when we come to this Pitch, always

ways to *think* that which is moſt *reaſonable*, and always to *practiſe* what we think ſo, then we are advanced to the *topmoſt* Round of our Perfection, in which is founded the *utmoſt* Happineſs we are capable of: So that in all the Courſe of our *Chriſtian* Practice we are in a *direct* Progreſſion and Tendency towards our Perfection and Happineſs. And as for the *Credenda* of *Chriſtianity*, the Doctrines it requires us to believe, they are all of them pregnant with the moſt *ſtrong* and *vehement* Motives to engage us to the Practice of what it enjoins; Motives that have ſuch a *Potent*, I had almoſt ſaid *Omnipotent* Force in them, that 'tis *impoſſible* for any Man heartily to believe, and throughly to weigh and conſider them, and not be effectually perſwaded by them! Since therefore it was ſo highly convenient that the *Son of God* in Perſon ſhould come down from *Heaven* among us, that ſo the Dignity of his Perſon might give Authority to that *Religion* by which the World was to be governed; and ſince he did come down upon this *honourable* Errand, it was impoſſible for him to have taught any Doctrine that could more effectually have promoted the *great* End of *Religion*, or more fully expreſſed his *infinite* Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Zeal for the Welfare of the Souls of Men, than that

which

which is contained in the *Chriſtian Religion*, which is every way ſo adapted to make Men *good* and *happy*, ſo accommodated to the Nature and Condition of Mankind, that there is nothing could better *become* the *only begotten Son* to teach in the World, or that could be more *worthy* of all thoſe *infinite* Perfections that are lodged in his Nature, and do ſpeak him to be the moſt *genuine* Offſpring of the moſt *High*. For ſo *excellent* was his Doctrine, that his very Enemies were aſtoniſhed at the *Wiſdom* that was given him, *Mark* 6. 2, 3. and wondered at the *gracious* Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, *Luke* 4. 22. Well therefore might he ſay of himſelf, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life*, *Joh.* 8. 12.

4*thly*. And laſtly, The *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life was ſuch as very *well became* the *only begotten Son*. For as it was highly *convenient* that he ſhould come down into the World, and in his *own* Perſon teach us that *Religion* by which he intended to govern us, that thereby he might ſtamp it with a more *awful* Authority; ſo to render it more ſucceſsful, it was no leſs *convenient* that he ſhould come down in *our* Natures, that therein he might be capable of

of practiſing what he taught us, and ſetting us an Example of what he would have us to do, that ſo we might ſee that he enjoined nothing upon us but what was *practicable*, and what did become the moſt *glorious* Perſon that ever did aſſume our Natures; that thereby we might be encouraged to our Duty, and animated with a *noble* Emulation of treading in his bleſſed Footſteps. Since therefore all this was ſo highly *convenient*, and the *Son of God* in Compliance with this Convenience did actually aſſume *our* Nature, it was impoſſible for him to lead a Life that *better* comported with this Deſign of his *Incarnation*, or *better* became the Dignity and Excellency of his Perſon than he did. For now that he was become a Man, he was obliged to act *ſuitably* to his Nature; and ſhould he have done any thing that was *unſuitable* to the State and Circumſtances of his Nature, he would not have acted becoming himſelf. So that it was highly *convenient* that he ſhould become a Man, and being a Man it was indiſpenſably *neceſſary* that he ſhould live like a *wiſe* and a *good* Man in the Condition and Relations wherein he was placed, and nothing could be more *worthy* of or *becoming* him, than ſo to do, though he was ſtill the *only begotten Son* of the Father. For it is the Glory of *God* himſelf

ſelf that he always acts moſt reaſonably according to the State and Relations of a *God*; and therefore when *God* becomes Man by aſſuming *our* Nature to his *own*, it is his Glory to act moſt reaſonably in the State and Relations of a Man. And thus did the *bleſſed Jeſus* do in the whole Courſe of his Converſation upon Earth; for his Life was a moſt *exact* Pattern of all *humane* Virtues, in which all that is *ornamental* to *humane* Nature was repreſented in its *faireſt* Colours: There you may ſee a *fair* Example of the moſt *ardent* Love to, and *conſtant* Dependance upon *God*, of the moſt *profound* Humility, and *perfect* Reſignation to his *Heavenly* Will. There you may behold the Moderation of *Humane* Paſſions and Appetites ſet forth to the Life, and fairly delineated in all its moſt *exquiſite* Perfections; in a word, there you will find *Loyalty* and *Submiſſion* to *Superiors*, *Fidelity* and *Juſtice* to *Equals*, *Courteſy*, and *Candor*, and *Condeſcention* to *Inferiors*, *univerſal* Love, and an *unbounded* Charity to all practiſed to the Height and Exactneſs; and which way ſoever you turn your Eyes on this *fair* Monument of Virtues, you can diſcover nothing but what is *lovely* and *adorable*, and infinitely becoming the *only begotten Son of the Father*.

Having

Having thus explained and demonſtrated the Propoſition to you, I ſhall conclude with theſe four Inferences from this *four-fold* Glory of the *Word* which they ſaw.

1. They ſaw the *glorious* Splendor which inveſted his Perſon at his *Baptiſm* and *Tranſfiguration*: From whence I infer his Deputation from the moſt *High God*, and Father of all Things, to be his Repreſentative and Vice-Roy in the *Chriſtian Church*. For this *viſible* Glory with which he was inveſted, was always the *peculiar* Character of the *immediate* Repreſentative of *God*; and therefore by way of Appropriation it is called *the Glory of God*, and *the Glory of the Lord*; and whereſoever *God*, as *Supream* Monarch and Governor, is repreſented as reſiding and taking up his *Royal* Habitation, there you always find him diſplaying himſelf in this *viſible* Glory and Splendor. Thus when by the *Eternal Word* he was repreſented among the *Jews* as their *ſupreme* Lord and Governor, he always manifeſted his *Majeſtick* Preſence among them by ſome *bright* and *ſhining* Appearance; the firſt Inſtance of which was his Appearance to *Moſes* from out of the *burning Buſh* upon Mount *Sinai*, where he firſt acted under *God* the *Father* as *Sovereign* King of *Iſrael* in commiſſioning *Moſes* to be their Captain and Leader out of *E-*

gypt; for here it is ſaid, that he *appeared in a flame of fire, Exod.* 3. 2. that is, in a *viſible* Glory that reſembled the Brightneſs of a Flame of Fire. For this Mountain he had choſen for the Seat and Throne of his *Majeſtical* Reſidence, from whence he intended to give Laws to *Iſrael*, and to exert his *Royal* Dominion over them; and therefore here he appears in that *viſible* Glory which was always the Character of the *divine* King, and *immediate* Repreſentative of *God* to that People. And indeed if that be true which *Joſephus* tells us, this Mountain was looked upon as the Habitation of *God* long before ever *Moſes* came thither; for therefore, ſays *Joſephus*, did *Moſes* drive his Father *Jethro*'s Flock thither to feed, becauſe of all other Places it moſt abounded with Paſture, διὰ τὸ δόξαν ἔχειν ἐνδιατρίβειν αὐτῷ τὸν θεὸν οὐ κατανεμηθῆναι πρότερον, οὐ τολμώντων ἐμβατεύειν εἰς αὐτὸ τῶν ποιμένων; that is, *becauſe it was famed that God dwelt there, which was the Reaſon that the Shepherds never durſt to drive their Flocks thither, becauſe of the Sacredneſs of the Place.* And if this Report were true, then it ſeems this Mountain was the Seat of the *Royal* Reſidence of the *Eternal Word* before ever *Moſes* came thither, and conſequently the Glory and Brightneſs

Joſ. Antiq. l. 2. p. 60.

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in which *Moſes* ſaw him appear, was nothing but the Diſplay of his *Majeſtick* Preſence which did there make its *ordinary* Abode. But whether that be *true* or *falſe*, it's moſt *plain* and *apparent* that whereſoever he appeared as the King of *Iſrael*, or Repreſentative of *God* to them, he always clothed himſelf in a *viſible* Glory and Splendor. Thus he appeared to them in a Pillar of Fire, that is, in a moſt *bright* and *luminous* Form, when he conducted them thro' the *Red-Sea*, and the Wilderneſs; and when he came down upon Mount *Sinai* to give the Law to them, it's ſaid that the Glory in which they beheld him was *like devouring fire*, *Exod.* 24. 17. that is, it was unſpeakably *bright* and *refulgent*, even like that of a moſt *intenſe* and *vehement* Fire; and in all this *radiant* Glory did he diſplay himſelf from between the Cherubims when he removed from the Mountain, and choſe the Tabernacle for the Seat of his *future* Reſidence and *Royal* Abode. Thus whereſoever he appeared in his *Kingly* Majeſty as the *publick* Repreſentative of his Father, this *viſible* Glory is always made mention of, as that which was the *peculiar* Character of his Preſence and Perſon. 'Tis true, 'tis recorded of *Moſes* that when he came down from the Viſion upon the Mount, his Face

ſhone ſo brightly that the *Iſraelites* were not able to approach him; which ſeems to argue that this *viſible* Glory was not ſo *peculiar* to the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Repreſentative, as we would have it, ſince we plainly ſee it was *common* to *Moſes* with him. But this doth no ways deſtroy our Aſſertion; becauſe it's plain that *that* Glory which covered the Face of *Moſes*, was all derived from the Glory of the *Eternal Word*, with whom for *forty* Days he had converſed in the Mount. For *Moſes* being ſent down as an Apoſtle to the *Jews* to promulgate thoſe Laws to them which he had received upon the Mount, the *Eternal Word*, to convince the *unbelieving Jews* that he had ſent him, reflects upon his Face ſome Rays of Glory from that Sphere of Light in which he appeared to and converſed with him, that *that* might be an *ocular* Demonſtration to them that *Moſes* came from him, and was commiſſioned by him to preach and promulgate his Laws to them. So that *Moſes* his Glory being derived from the *Word*, declared him to be his Apoſtle and Miniſter; even as the Glory of the *Word* being derived from the Father, declared him to be his Repreſentative and Vice-Roy; ſo that from its ſhining upon the Face of *Moſes*, it by no means follows that this *viſible* Glory is

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not the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Repreſentative; becauſe that which ſhone upon his Face was only the *Parhelius* or Reflection of the *viſible* Glory of him who was God's *immediate* Repreſentative. For ſo the Earth alſo is ſaid to *ſhine with the Glory of the God of Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 43. 2. and as the Glory with which it ſhone was not the Glory of the Earth, but the Glory of the *God of Iſrael*; ſo neither was that Glory upon the Face of *Moſes* the Glory of *Moſes*, but the Glory of that *divine* Perſon, with whom he had converſed, derived to, and reflected upon him; and it being ſtill the *proper* Glory of that *divine* Perſon, may very well be ſaid to be the *peculiar* Character of his being the *immediate* Repreſentative of *God*, notwithſtanding it reflected from him upon *Moſes*; eſpecially conſidering that this *reflected* Glory upon *Moſes* his Face was to be an Evidence to the *Jews* that he came down to them as an Apoſtle from the *Eternal Word* with Authority to publiſh, and declare his Laws to them. For if this *derivative* Splendor was an Evidence that *Moſes* came down as an Apoſtle from that *divine* Perſon on the Mount, then the *original* Splendor of that *divine* Perſon whence it was derived and reflected, was at leaſt an *equal* Evidence that he came down upon the Mount as the Apo-

ſtle, and *immediate* Repreſentative of the moſt *High God* himſelf.

And in the ſame manner we find that the *Word Incarnate* did give Evidence to the Commiſſion of his *Chriſtian Apoſtles*; for upon the *Day of Pentecoſt*, when they were aſſembled together, it is ſaid that *there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of fire, and ſat upon every one of them, Acts* 2. 3. that is, there were ſeveral Flaſhes, or Beams of Glory which like *bright* Flames of Fire, did cleave aſunder in many Places according to the *natural* Motion of Flames, of which every Part as it extends it ſelf in Length grows more *Spire-like* or *Pyremidal*, and ſo divides from the Part next to it; and upon the Head of every one of the Apoſtles, did one of theſe *divided* Flames of Glory reſt in the Form of a Tongue, which like a Flame grows *ſharper* and *ſharper* towards the Top: For thus the *Hebrew Idiom* for a Flame of Fire uſes the *Tongue* of Fire, becauſe of the Reſemblance that is between them, *Iſa.* 5. 24. So that as the *Eternal Word* did evidence to the *Jews* the Apoſtleſhip of *Moſes* by that *viſible* Glory which he reflected on his Face, ſo did the *Word Incarnate* evidence to the *Chriſtian Church* the Apoſtleſhip of the *Twelve* by this *viſible* Glory which he derived upon them. For now, according to

John

John the *Baptiſt's* Prediction of him, he baptized them *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire, Luke* 3. 16. that is, by the *outward* Sign of that *viſible* Glory which reſted like Fire upon them, he ſolemnly initiated them into their *Apoſtleſhip*, and declared them to be the *Heralds* of his Will to the World. And as this *viſible* Glory with which he baptized them, was an Evidence of their being ſent *from*, and commiſſionated by *him* to bear his Authority, and repreſent his Perſon; ſo that *viſible* Glory with which he was baptized from *Heaven*, firſt in the River *Jordan*, and afterwards upon Mount *Tabor*, was an *undoubted* Evidence that he was ſent from *above* to be his Father's Repreſentative in the *Church*: For if their ſhining with his Glory was an Evidence of their being inveſted with his Authority, then his ſhining with his Father's Glory muſt be an *equal* Evidence of his being inveſted with the Authority of his Father. And as this *viſible* Glory was always the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Repreſentative, and the *Royal* Crown and Robes as it were with which the moſt *High* adorned him at his *Inauguration*, and Inveſtment with his *own Kingly* Authority; ſo St. *Peter* expreſly tells *Cornelius* and his Company, that *God had anointed him with the Holy Ghoſt, and with*

Power, *Acts* 10. 13. that is, by that *outward* Sign of the *visible* Glory in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him, he had invested him with *Regal* Power, and deputed and declared him to be King of the *Church*. And this in all probability was the Reason why he forbad his Disciples to declare his Transfiguration till after *his Resurrection from the Dead*, *Mark* 9. 9. because he knew that if they did, the *Jews* would not believe it, but would maliciously interpret it to be a *false* Pretence of his to the Title of God's *immediate* Representative and Vice-Roy, that *visible* Glory in which he appeared being the *proper* Character of that *divine* King by whom the most *High God* had formerly governed them; and therefore in all the History of his Life you find he did industriously avoid openly to avow his *Regal* Authority, and only insinuates it by Consequences and *obscure* Intimations. For so violently were they prejudiced against his being their *King* upon the account of his *obscure* Parentage, and *mean* Condition, that he could not but foresee how *unseasonable* it would yet be publickly to own his *Regal* Authority, and consequently the Glory of his Transfiguration which did so apparently infer it; till by more *miraculous* Effects, and particularly by his *Resurrection from the Dead*, he had sufficiently proved

proved and demonſtrated it; and then he openly declares without any Reſerve, that *all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth*, *Matth.* 28. 18. Since therefore it is ſo apparent by this *Characteriſtical* Glory, in which his Perſon was inrobed, and which the *Apoſtle* aſſures us they ſaw him inveſted with, we have all the Reaſon in the World to conclude that the moſt *High God* hath deputed him to be King and Lord of the *Church*. For when the *Apoſtle* tells us that they ſaw this *viſible* Glory which ſhone upon him at his *Baptiſm* and *Transfiguration*, he doth as good as ſay that they ſaw all the Solemnity of his *divine* Coronation, that they beheld the moſt *High God* circling his Brows with the *Royal* Diadem, and inveſting his *ſacred* Body with the *Imperial* Robes of the *great* King of the World. So that if it be true what St. *John* ſays, that they did ſee this Glory, (as we have all the Reaſon in the World to conclude it is, becauſe he offered to ſeal his Teſtimony of it with his Blood, and the other *two* that ſaw it with him actually did ſo) then we cannot but acknowledge the *bleſſed Jeſus* to be *our* King, to whoſe *divine* Authority we are bound to pay the *loweſt* Homage and Obedience; and that whenſoever we wilfully tranſgreſs his Laws, we do openly rebel againſt our moſt *rightful* Sove-

Sovereign, to whoſe Service we are bound by all *poſſible* Ties and Obligations.

2. They ſaw the Glory of that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Courſe of his Miniſtry; from whence I infer the Credibility of the *Chriſtian Religion:* For the many *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought, were a moſt *plain* and *unqueſtionable* Evidence of a *Divine* Power reſiding in him, and accompanying his Miniſtry. For never were there ſo many *miraculous* Effects produced, either *before* or *ſince*, in the World, by the moſt *renowned* Workers of Miracles that ever were; and all that hath been done by the moſt *famous* Magicians, that are recorded in Hiſtory, were but like the *little* Tricks and Deluſions of *Jugglers*, compared with the *wondrous* Works of our *Saviour*; and yet 'tis apparent that his Education had been moſt *plain* and *ſimple*, that he never had been inſtructed in any *Mathematical* Science, or *myſtical* Rites, or in any *other* Art of performing Wonders, either by *Humane* Wit or *Diabolical* Aſſiſtance; but was bred up under the Care of his *poor honeſt* Parents, who were forced to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, and ſo in all Probability was trained up in his Father's Profeſſion, that ſo by his *daily* Labour he might be able to contribute to the

the Charge of his Maintenance. And yet 'tis plain, this *home-bred* Perſon ſometimes, only by ſpeaking of a Word, ſometimes meerly by the Touch of his Hand, ſometimes by a *ſilent* Virtue proceeding from him without any *outward* Sign intervening, did *more* and far *greater* Wonders in *three* or *four* Years Time, than all the moſt *skilful Phyſicians*, *Magicians*, and *Mathematicians* could ever do either *before* or *after* him. Now how was it poſſible that ever ſuch a Perſon ſhould ever have accompliſhed ſuch *great* and *mighty* Things as he did, had he not been endued with Power from above? And if he was endued with ſuch a Power, what *greater* Evidence can we deſire of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine? For it is not *ſuppoſable* that the *God* of Truth would have endued our *Saviour* with this *miraculous* Power, had that Doctrine been *falſe* which he ſought to confirm by it; becauſe in ſo doing he would have openly *patronized* a Cheat, and deſignedly contributed to the Propagation of an Impoſture which is utterly *inconſiſtent* with his Truth and Veracity: So that now the Truth of *Chriſtianity* finally reſolves into the Veracity of *God*, which is the Foundation of all the Certainty in the World. For admitting that *God* can either *deceive* or be *deceived*,

ed, we do not know but our Faculties may be conſtantly impoſed upon, and then there is nothing in Nature that we can be certain of: So that if it be true, as St. *John* here teſtifies, that they did ſee the Glory of our Saviour's Miracles, that is a moſt *undeniable* Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine; and that they did ſee it, I think is as evident: For it is not imaginable that any *ſingle* Man would openly teſtifie a *known* Lye without ſome Temptation inducing him thereunto; much leſs that ſo many *Hundreds* of Perſons as the *Eye-Witneſſes* of our Saviour's Miracles were, ſhould conſpire to cheat the World, not only when they had *no* Temptation to it, but when they had *all* the Reaſon in the World againſt it; for they ſaw their Maſter ſuffer a *ſhameful* Death before their Eyes, by which they might eaſily divine what their *own* Fate would be if they perſevered to preach up his Miracles and Doctrine, which they could not reſolve to do without bidding Adieu to all their *temporal* Hopes, and ingaging themſelves to undergo all the Miſeries and Calamities in the World; and if they teſtified what they knew to be *falſe*, they tranſgreſſed the Rule of their *own* Religion, and thereby forfeited all their Hopes of a *bleſſed* Immortality in the Life to come.

And

And can it be imagined that ſo many Men ſhould at the *ſame* Time ſo unanimouſly agree to report and teſtifie the Miracles of a Man whom they had lately ſeen crucified before their Eyes, when they knew in their *own* Conſciences, that it was all a *meer* Forgery, and could not but foreſee, that by perſiſting in it, they ſhould incur an *inevitable* Ruin in this Life, and an *eternal* Damnation in the Life to come? Was there ever ſuch a *deſperate* Piece of Madneſs heard of from the Beginning of the World to this Day? And yet this *monſtrous* Thing, which is by a *thouſand* Times more *incredible* than any thing in the *Chriſtian Religion*, we muſt not only imagin may *be*, but believe that it really *was*; or elſe confeſs that St. *John* ſays true here, that they did ſee the Glory of his Miracles, which is ſo *undoubted* an Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. Wherefore ſince we are compaſſed about with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, let us by a *lively* and *vigorous* Faith adhere to the Truth of our *holy Religion*, and then we ſhall find it *quick* and *mighty* through *God*, to the caſting down the ſtrong Holds of our *vicious* Habits, and implanting in us all thoſe *divine* Diſpoſitions which are neceſſary to qualifie us for thoſe *endleſs* Joys which our *bleſſed Lord* hath promiſed to, and prepared for us.

3. They

3. They ſaw the Glory of that *divine* and *incomparable* Doctrine which he taught: From whence I infer the Unreaſonableneſs of Mens entertaining *mean* and *contemptible* Opinions of the *Chriſtian Faith*, ſince it is ſo *excellent* in it ſelf that it was a Glory to the Son of God to be the Author of it. We have a ſort of Men among us who would fain be accounted the *Wits* and *Virtuoſo's* of the Age, who pretend to acknowledge a *God*, and a *Providence*, and all the Principles of *Natural Religion*, and yet openly profeſs a very *mean* and *contemptible* Opinion of *Chriſtianity*, and take all Occaſions to repreſent it as a *ridiculous* Fiction, fit only to be impoſed upon the *credulous* Vulgar. But I would fain know of theſe *mighty Men of Reaſon*, what *plauſible* Pretence they can urge for this their *bold* and *blaſphemous* Cenſure? Is it becauſe *Chriſtianity* is a *Revealed Religion?* or, becauſe there is any thing in it that is *unworthy* of *God* whom we pretend to be the Revealer of it? or becauſe there wants *credible* Evidence of its being revealed by him? If they pretend to reject it becauſe 'tis a *Revealed Religion*, I would beſeech them to conſider how it could have comported with the Goodneſs of *God* never to make any Revelation of his Will to the World, when the Generality of Men were loſt

loſt in ſuch a *Mid-night* of Ignorance in reſpect of *Natural Religion*; how even the *natural* Notions of the *Deity* were corrupted into all manner of Follies and Vanities, and Men had formed Religions not only *hateful* to *God*, but *nauſeous* to all that were *wiſe* among themſelves; and how defective alſo they were in the *beſt* and *pureſt* Precepts of *Morality*, having at laſt conſecrated their Vices, and inthroned them among the Graces of *Religion*: In which *miſerable* State of Things, it is ſo far from being *unreaſonable* to expect a Revelation, that 'tis hardly *poſſible* to vindicate God's Goodneſs without ſuppoſing it. For ſhould he have *for ever* left Mankind in this *bewilder'd* State without Revelation, he would have been more wanting to Man, who is the *nobleſt* of all his *earthly* Creatures, than he is to the moſt *contemptible* Animal; for to his *meaneſt* Creatures he hath given *ſufficient* Ability to attain the *higheſt* End of their Beings, which Mankind can hardly be ſuppoſed to have in his *corrupt degenerate* State, without ſuppoſing a *new* Revelation from *Heaven*. For we having an *innate* Notion within us of a *Supreme Being* above us, that is ſuperlatively *good*, and endued with all *poſſible* Perfection; our *natural* Reaſon dictates to us, that to converſe with and enjoy him *for ever*,

ever, is the *higheſt* Good that we are capable of, and the moſt *ſuitable* to our *rational* Natures; but by what means we may be reconciled to him in this State of Revolt whereinto we are fallen, and how at length we may arrive to the Enjoyment of him, could never have been ſufficiently made known to us in this *Maze* of Ignorance wherein we were involved, without ſome *divine* Revelation: And therefore to ſuppoſe Revelation *unreaſonable* in our *miſerable* State and Circumſtances, is to ſuppoſe it *unreaſonable* for the *great* and *good* Governor of the World to furniſh his *nobleſt* Creature *Man* with *ſufficient* means to obtain his moſt *excellent* End. And if it be acknowledged that there is a Revelation, becauſe it is ſo highly *reaſonable* that there ſhould be, let us conſider which of all the Religions in the World, that pretends to be from *God*, is moſt likely to be the Revelation of his Will, and then I doubt not, if we impartially compare them, but our Reaſon will ſoon give its Vote for *Chriſtianity*. If you enquire for this Revelation of the *Enthuſiaſtick Poets* of the *Heathen*, how *wild* and *extravagant* is that *Religion* which we find in the *Theology* of *Heſiod*, the *Hymns* of *Orpheus*, the *Odes* of *Pindar*, and the *Poems* of *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Ovid*? If you conſult the *Heathen*

Heathen Oracles of *Delphos*, *Dodana*, and *Jupiter Hammon*, how *vain* and *frivolous*, how *uncertain* and *fallacious*, are all their Reſponſes? beſides that, the Books and Records of them are long ſince periſhed and conſumed. If you enquire for this Revelation in the *Old Roman Theology*, which *Numa* pretended to receive from his Goddeſs *Egeria*, that alſo is loſt, being burnt by the *Roman Senate*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us; for that it contained many Things in it not only deſtructive to the Gods and Religions of other Countries, but alſo to his *own* and the *Roman* Profeſſion. Or ſhall we confront *Chriſtianity* with the *Alcboran* of *Mahomet*, which he often pretends to have received from God? There we ſhall find every Page almoſt abounding with *monſtrous* Cheats and Impoſtures, the whole being nothing elſe but a *confuſed* Medly of *impious* and *contemptible* Fopperies, heaped together by a *Triumvirate* of *Arians*, *Jews*, and *Pagans*, who were all of them *known* Impoſtors in the Ages wherein they lived: So that to confront *Chriſtianity* with any of theſe, is to light up a *Ruſh Candle*, and reſolve to outface the Sun with it. For as for *Chriſtianity*, 'tis a *Religion* made up of the moſt *divine* and *Godlike* Inſtitutions; its Precepts being ſuch as are moſt *worthy* of God, enjoining

nothing but what is either *true* Godlineſs, and moſt *generous* Morality, or what are the moſt *efficacious* Means and Inſtruments of promoting them. And as for its Doctrine, it partly conſiſts of thoſe Principles of *Natural Religion* which all *wiſe* Men, of whatſoever Nation or Religion, have owned and acknowledged, ſuch as the *Exiſtence*, *Unity*, and *Providence* of the *Godhead*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* of *another Life*, together with the *great Day* of Accounts, wherein Men ſhall receive according to what they have done in the Fleſh: And even the Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*, which is the *profoundeſt* Myſtery of all our *Religion*, hath been owned and profeſſed by the *greateſt* and moſt *famous Philoſophers* that ever were. And as for thoſe Doctrines that are purely *Chriſtian*, ſuch as the *Birth*, and *Life*, and *Death*, the *Reſurrection* and *Aſcenſion* of our *Saviour*, together with his Sitting at the *Right-hand* of *God*, and coming at the *laſt* Day to judge the World, they are all of them ſo excellently contrived to ſerve the *great* Ends of *Religion*, ſo wonderfully *pregnant* with Motives and Arguments to engage Men to the *greateſt* Purity and Goodneſs, that by their *own native* Beauty, and *excellent* Contrivance, they manifeſt themſelves to be the Products of a *divine* Wiſdom

Wiſdom. So that there can be no *reaſonable* Pretence to contemn *Chriſtianity* either becauſe it is a *Revealed Religion*, or becauſe it contains any thing in it that is any ways *unworthy* of the Revealer: And that there wants not *ſufficient* Evidence to demonſtrate it to be the Revelation of God, I have already proved in the former Inference. So that after all the *lewd* Talk of theſe *confident* Men, it's apparent there is not the *leaſt* Colour of Reaſon for their *impious* Cenſures of *Chriſtianity*. But alas! it's evident that the Foundation of their Quarrel againſt it, lies not ſo much in their Reaſon, as their Luſts. *Chriſtianity* lays them under *ſevere* Reſtraints, and will not permit them to be *wicked* in quiet, which provokes them to arm their Wit, and the *little* Reaſon that they have againſt it; that ſo having baffled, or rather laughed themſelves out of their *Religion*, they may be left at liberty to play the Fools and Mad-men without Controul or Diſturbance. And I make no doubt but if inſtead of that *ſtrict* Piety and Virtue which *Chriſtianity* enjoins, it had but indulged to them the Liberties of the *Heathen* Religion, ſo that they could have but acted all their Wickedneſs with Devotion, ſacrificed to the Gods in *drunken* Bowls, and worſhipped in the Arms of a *Strumpet*, there are no Men in the World would have been more *zealous*

Chriſtians than they. But let no Man be ſo *fooliſh* as to imagine that he can alter the Nature of Things by laughing at them, or that *Chriſtianity* will ceaſe to be *true* in Compliance with our *wicked* Intereſt and Deſires; no, no, Things will be as they are in deſpite of us, and howſoever we will pleaſe to fancy them. And if after all our *rude* Contempts of *Religion*, it be found to be *true*, as I doubt not but it will, we ſhall be *ſenſible* when it is *too* late that it had been more for our Safety to have play'd before the Mouth of a *Cannon* while it is ſpitting Fire, or to have catch'd hold of a *Thunderbolt* as it comes roaring down from the Clouds, than to have plaid with *Religion*, and made it the Subject of our *impious* Scorns and Buffooneries.

4. And laſtly; They ſaw the Glory of his *immaculate* Holineſs and Purity: From whence I infer, that Holineſs and *true* Goodneſs is the *greateſt* Glory and Honour to *humane* Nature. For this was the Glory of the *Son of God* himſelf when he aſſumed our Nature, and dwelt among us; and there is nothing more *glorious* in *Chriſt* than his Goodneſs; and notwithſtanding thoſe *excellent* Doctrines that he preached, thoſe *ſtupendous* Miracles that he wrought, and that *viſible* Splendor in which he was inrobed, he had not

deſerved

deſerved the Name of a *great* and *glorious* Man if he had not been *juſt* and *charitable*, *temperate*, and *humble*, and *Heavenly-minded*, and *eminent* in all thoſe *divine* and *humane* Virtues which are the *proper* Glory and Ornament of *humane* Nature. For that which makes a Man more *honourable* than a *meer* Animal, and advances us into the *next* Degree of Beings to Angels, is our Reaſon, by which alone we border upon the Divinity, and do claim Kindred with the *Angelical* Natures. That therefore which is truly our Honour and Glory, conſiſts in living according to that Reaſon by which we are advanced above all *ſublunary* Natures; that is, in governing our *Paſſions* and *Appetites*, *Words* and *Actions*, according to thoſe *Eternal* Rules of Righteouſneſs which *Right* Reaſon dictates to us; and if inſtead of doing thus, we wholly reſign up our ſelves to the Dominion of our *brutiſh* and *unreaſonable* Inclinations, we thereby render our ſelves more *deſpicable* and *infamous* than the moſt *beaſtly* Brutes in all the Creation, and even thoſe *Goats*, and *Wolves*, and *Swine*, and *Tygers*, whom we reſemble in our *beaſtly* Manners, could they ſee our Shame, would doubtleſly hiſs at us, and reproach us for *greater* Beaſts than themſelves; for they all live *up* to the *beſt* of their Natures, and regularly purſue the *higheſt* End

for which they were created; whereas we who are Allyed to the *nobleſt* of Beings, and are created and deſigned for the moſt *glorious* Ends, do by our *baſe* and *unreaſonable* Condeſcentions ſhamefully under-value our ſelves in purſuing no Ends but what are extremely *unworthy* of us: So that it had been much more for our Honour and Reputation to have aſſumed the Shape and Nature of Brutes, when we aſſumed their Manners and Cuſtoms; for then our Actions would have very well become us, and neither *God* nor *Men* could have juſtly upbraided us for them. But to lead the Lives of *Brutes* in the Shape and Nature of *Men*, is *monſtrous*; 'tis to advance the *Beaſt* above the *Man*, to place our *Heels* where Nature hath placed our *Head*, and become our own *Reverſe* and *Antipodes*.

OF

OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE Holy Scripture.

JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.

BY the *Scriptures* here muſt be meant the *Old Teſtament*; for as yet the *greateſt* Part of the *New* was *unrevealed*, and the *whole* of it *unwritten*. They were thoſe very *Scriptures* which the *unbelieving Jews*, to whom our *Saviour* was now preaching, owned and acknowledged to be the Word of God; *for in them*, ſays our Saviour, *ye think ye have eternal life*; which it's certain they did not *think* of any *other Scriptures* but only thoſe of the *Old Teſtament*; *and they are they*, ſays he, *which teſtify of me*. And to be ſure there were no *other*

Scriptures which could teſtify of *Chriſt* to the *unbelieving Jews*, but only thoſe of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, theſe being the only *Scriptures* whoſe Teſtimony they credited. But yet the Reaſon which our *Saviour* urges to move them to read the *Old Teſtament*, doth as much oblige us to read the *New* as well as the Old, as it did them to read the *Old*; *for in them ye think to have eternal life*; that is, in them ye think ye have *eternal Life* promiſed, and all the Neceſſaries to be believed, and done by you in order to your obtaining it, propoſed to you. And indeed as they thought, ſo it was; they had *eternal Life* propoſed to them in *Hieroglyphicks*; for *that* was the Myſtery of their *Holy of Holies*, *that* was the Interpretation of their Land of *Canaan*, and the *ſpiritual* Senſe of all their *general* Promiſes of *good* Things to come: They had all the Articles of Faith, and all the Inſtances of Duty that were *neceſſary* to their Attainment of *eternal Life* exhibited to them in the Writings of their Prophets, and the Types and Figures of their Law. For it was by this Rule alone that all the *holy* Men of the *Jewiſh Nation* did live and believe; and either this was *ſufficient* to guide and direct them to *eternal Life*, or they were left under a *fatal* Neceſſity of falling ſhort of it:

it: It was the *Law of the Lord* that did *enlighten their Eyes, and rejoyce their Hearts, and convert their Souls*; and it was *in keeping it* that they found *great Reward*, *Pſ.*19. 7,8,11. And therefore either they fell ſhort of the Reward of *eternal Life* notwithſtanding this their Illumination and Converſion, or they found it in keeping that Law by which they were illuminated and converted; and if in keeping their Law they found *eternal* Life, then it's certain that in their Law *they* had it. So that theſe Words of our *Saviour (for in them ye think ye have eternal life)* do not imply that they were miſtaken in thinking ſo, or at leaſt they only imply that they were miſtaken in thinking to obtain *eternal Life* by adhering to the *prime* and *literal* Senſe of their Law without purſuing the Myſtery and *Spiritual* Meaning of it; which was indeed the Error of the *Phariſees*, with whom our *Saviour* is here diſcourſing. For the *internal* Senſe and Myſtery of their Law was the *Goſpel*, all whoſe Articles of Faith, and Precepts of Duty, were (though darkly and obſcurely) expreſſed and repreſented in the Types and Figures of the *Moſaick* Inſtitution. And hence the Apoſtle tells us, that both the *Prieſts* and their *Oblations*, *did ſerve unto the example, and ſhadow of heavenly things*, *Heb.*8.5. So that the *heavenly Things* contained

ed in the *Goſpel* were the *ſubſtantial* Idea's which thoſe *Legal* Types and Patterns contained and repreſented; and the ſame Author calls that Law *a ſhadow of good things to come*, *Heb.* 10. 1. that is, it was an *obſcure* Scheme or Prefiguration of the Mercies of the *Goſpel*, of which *eternal* Life is a *principal* Part. Since therefore the Law was nothing elſe but only the *Goſpel* in *dark* and *obſcure* Cyphers, if in *this* we *Chriſtians* have *eternal Life*, in *that* the *Jews* had it alſo: And therefore the Reaſon which our *Saviour* here urges to oblige the *Jews* to *ſearch the Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament*; [*for in them ye think ye have eternal life*] doth at leaſt equally oblige us *Chriſtians* to ſearch the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New*. For if they had *juſt* Reaſon to think they had *eternal Life* in the *Old Teſtament*, and were thereupon obliged to ſearch into it, we have rather *more* Reaſon to think that we have *eternal Life* in the *New*, ſince the *New Teſtament* is nothing elſe but only the *Old* decyphered and unriddled; and therefore we muſt not only have *eternal Life* in *this*, as they had in *that*, but we muſt alſo have it far more expreſly than they. In the Proſecution of this Argument therefore, I ſhall endeavour theſe *Two* Things:

I. To

I. To ſhew you that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life.*

II. That this is a very *forcible* Reaſon to oblige us to ſearch them.

I. Firſt, that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*; that is, that in them we have *eternal Life* propoſed to us, together with all that is *neceſſary* to be believed, and practiſed by us in order to our obtaining it; or in other words, that the *Holy Scripture* is a *ſufficient* Rule both of Faith and Manners to guide and direct us to *eternal* Happineſs. And this is *one* Article of the Faith of the *Church of England*, which we are required to explain to the People; for ſo in her ſixth Article *our Church* profeſſes, *that the Holy Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, or may be proved thence, is not required of any Man that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation.* Now to make the *Scripture* a *ſufficient* Rule as to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, there are *two* Things neceſſary; *Firſt*, That it ſhould be *full*; and, *Secondly*, That it ſhould be *clear*: both which the *Holy Scripture* is in an *eminent* Degree, as containing in it all that is *neceſſary* to be

be believed, and done in order to *eternal Life*. And this will evidently appear from theſe three following Propoſitions:

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inſpired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*.

2. That they preached to the World all thoſe *Neceſſaries* with which the *Holy Spirit* inſpired them.

3. That all thoſe *neceſſary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in thoſe *Sacred* Writings of theirs of which the *Holy Scripture* conſiſts.

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inſpired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*. For, *firſt*, our *Saviour*, by whom they were originally inſtructed, declares, that as the *Father loved him, and ſhewed him all things that himſelf did*, *Joh.* 5. 20. ſo *he had made known to them all things that he had heard of his Father*, *Joh.* 17. 8. And then when he went from them, and ceaſed to inſtruct them in his *own* Perſon, he promiſed that by his *Spirit* he would *teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatſoever he had ſaid unto them*, *Joh.* 14. 26. and that by the ſame *Spirit* he would *guide them into all Truth*, *Joh.* 16. 13. If there-

therefore the *Spirit* did perform this Promiſe to them, (as there is no doubt but he did) then we are ſure that he did teach them over again whatſoever *Chriſt* had taught them before, and if *Chriſt* had taught them whatſoever he had heard of his Father, (as he declares he had) then it is certain either that he taught them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*, or that he himſelf had not heard from his Father all Things that are *neceſſary* thereunto.

2. That as they were taught by the Spirit, all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*, ſo what they were taught, they preached and delivered to the World. For ſo our *Saviour* commanded them to go forth into all the World, and *teach all Nations to obſerve all* thoſe *things which he had commanded* them, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. Which Injunction of his they ſtrictly obſerved; for ſo we are told, that in Obedience to it, *they went forth, and preached every where*, *Mark* 16. 20. And that their preaching extended to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, is evident from their *own* Teſtimony: For thus St. *Paul* tells the *Epheſians* that he had *not ſhunned to declare unto them the whole Counſel of God*, *Acts* 20. 27. And to be ſure in the *whole* Counſel of *God*, all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation muſt be included. And concerning *that Goſpel* which

which he had preached to the *Corinthians*, he thus pronounces, *By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 1, 2. But how could they be ſaved by that *Goſpel*, he preached to them, unleſs it contained in it all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation? And this very *Goſpel* which the Apoſtles in their *conſtant* Miniſtry propoſed to the World, St. *James* calls the *ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave our Souls*, *Jam.* 1. 21. And for the ſame Reaſon it is alſo called the *Word of Reconciliation*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. The *Word of Salvation*, *Acts* 13. 26. And the *Word of Life*, *Acts* 5. 20. And *the Savour of Life unto Life*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. And alſo *the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believes*, *Rom.* 1. 17. Neither of which it could be juſtly ſtiled, ſuppoſing it to be *defective* in any Thing *neceſſary* to the *eternal* Happineſs of Men.

3. And laſtly, That all thoſe *neceſſary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in thoſe Writings of theirs, of which the *Holy Scripture* conſiſts. It is true, before the *Chriſtian* Doctrine was collected into thoſe *Scriptures* of which the *New Teſtament* now conſiſts, it was all conveyed by *Oral Tradition* from the Mouths of the Teachers, to the Ears of the Diſciples; but in

in a *little* Time thoſe *holy* Men who firſt preached it, found an *abſolute* Neceſſity of committing it to Writing, as a much *ſurer* Way of preſerving it *uncorrupted*, and tranſmitting it down to all *ſucceeding* Generations; for thus *Euſebius* tells us,

[1] *That the* Romans *not being ſatisfied with St.* Peter's *preaching of Chriſtianity to them, earneſtly deſired St.* Mark, *his Companion, that he would leave them in Writing, a ſtanding Monument of that Doctrine which St.* Peter *had delivered to them by Word of Mouth, which was the Occaſion,* ſays he, *of the writing of St.* Mark's *Goſpel: Which thing St.* Peter *underſtanding by a Revelation of the Spirit, being highly pleaſed with their earneſt Deſire, he confirmed it by his own Authority, that it might afterwards be read in the Churches.* It ſeems in thoſe Days the *Romans* did not think *oral* or *unwritten Traditions* a *ſufficient* Conſervatory of *divine* Truths, nor did their *Biſhop* then forbid the reading of the *Scriptures* to the Laity in their *own* Language. After which he tells us [2],

that *St.* Matthew *and St.* John *were the only Diſciples of our Lord, who had left written Commentaries of the Things which they had preached behind them; and it was,* ſays he, *Neceſſity that impelled*

[1] Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 2. c. 15.

[2] L. 3. c. 24.

impelled them to write. For Matthew *having preached the Faith to the Hebrews, and intending to go from them to other Nations, wrote his Goſpel in his own Country-Language, that thereby he might ſupply the Want of his Preſence to thoſe whom he left behind him. And afterwards when* Mark *and* Luke *had publiſhed their Goſpels,* John *who had hitherto only preached the Goſpel by Word of Mouth, being at length moved by the ſame Reaſon betook himſelf to write. And the Three former Goſpels,* ſays he, *arriving to the Knowledge of all Men, and particularly of St.* John, *he approved them, and with his own Teſtimony confirmed the Truth of them.* From which Relation it's evident, that *that* which moved thoſe *holy* Men to commit their *Goſpels* to Writing, was this, that they judged it *neceſſary* for the Conſervation of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine, that ſo theſe in their Abſence might be *ſtanding* Monuments of the Faith, to preach that *Goſpel* to Mens Eyes which they had preached to their Ears: And if they wrote to preſerve the Faith, to be ſure they would leave no *neceſſary* or *eſſential* Part of it unwritten. There are ſeveral Propoſitions in theſe *Goſpels* which, though very *uſeful*, are far from being *eſſential* Parts of *Chriſtianity*; and can we imagine that thoſe *holy* Men who wrote on purpoſe to conſerve *Chriſtianity*, ſhould take ſo much Care to write many

many Things which are not *neceſſary* Parts, and in the mean time omit any Things that are? *Euſebius* tells us of St. *Mark* in particular, ἐνὸς γὰρ ἐποιήσατο πρόνοιαν τῷ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσε παραλιπεῖν, ἢ ψεύσασθαί τι ἐν αὐτοῖς; i. e. *he took great Care of this more eſpecially, not to pretermit any of thoſe Things which he had heard,* (even from St. *Peter*) *nor to affix any thing to them that was falſe:* And if he were ſo *careful* not to omit any Thing, to be ſure he would be particularly careful not to omit any Thing which he judged *neceſſary* to the *eternal* Happineſs of Men. But what need we depend upon *humane* Authority, when as, if we conſult thoſe *Sacred* Writings themſelves, (which ſo far as they go, all *Chriſtians* allow to be the *Word* of *God*) we ſhall find they give this Teſtimony of themſelves, that they comprehend in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal* Life. For thus the Writers of the *New Teſtament* teſtify of the *Old, That they are able to make us wiſe unto Salvation through Faith which is in Jeſus Chriſt,* 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And if the *Old Teſtament* alone was able to do this, then much more the *Old* and *New* together; but how could they make Men *wiſe to Salvation,* if they were *defective* in any Article that is *neceſſary* to Salvation? And then the ſame Author goes on and tells us, that *all Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works, v.* 16. 17. And if the *Old Scriptures* were *ſufficient* to make the Man of God *perfect,* and to furniſh him throughly unto all *good* Works, one would think that the *New*

and *Old* together ſhould not be *defective*. For that the *Scriptures* of the *New Teſtament* as well as of the *Old* contain in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*, they themſelves do plainly teſtify of themſelves: For thus St. *Luke* in the Beginning of his *Goſpel* tells his *Theophilus*, to whom he writes, that *foraſmuch as many had ſet forth a Declaration of thoſe things that were ſurely believed among Chriſtians, it ſeemed good unto him alſo having had a perfect underſtanding of all things from the firſt, to write them down in order that he might know the Certainty of thoſe things wherein he had been inſtructed:* From whence I infer, that ſuppoſing St. *Luke* performed what he promiſed, his *Goſpel* muſt contain a *full* Declaration of the *Chriſtian Religion:* For, *Firſt*, by promiſing to give an Account of thoſe Things which were ſurely believed among *Chriſtians*, he engaged himſelf to give an *entire* Account of *Chriſtianity*, unleſs we will ſuppoſe that there were ſome Parts of *Chriſtianity* which the *Chriſtians* of that Time did not ſurely believe. *Secondly*, In promiſing to give an Account of thoſe Things of which he had a *perfect* Underſtanding from the firſt, and in which his *Theophilus* had been inſtructed, he alſo engages himſelf to give a *compleat* Account of the whole *Religion*, unleſs we will ſuppoſe that there were ſome Parts of this *Religion* which St. *Luke* did not perfectly underſtand, and in which *Theophilus* had not been before inſtructed. Thus alſo St. *John* teſtifies of his *Goſpel*, Chap. 20.31. *Theſe things are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* And if it be objected, that

that by *theſe Things* the Apoſtle only means the Miracles of *Chriſt* which are the Motives of our Belief, and not his Doctrines which are to be believed by us; this is notoriouſly *falſe*, ſince by *theſe Things* St. *John* means his *Goſpel* in which not only the Miracles, but the Doctrines of *Chriſt* are contained; and therefore in his firſt Epiſtle, *chap.* 5. 13. he ſaith, *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe*, or continue to believe *on the name of the Son of God:* Where by *Theſe Things* it's plain he means only that *Chriſtian* Doctrine which he had been teaching throughout the whole Epiſtle. From which *two* Places I argue, that *all* Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life* are written, becauſe he expreſly tells us that *Theſe Things* were written to this end, that they might beget and nouriſh in us that Faith by which we may obtain *eternal Life*; but if that Faith which theſe *written* Things was deſigned to beget in us, be not *ſufficient* to *eternal Life*, then were theſe Things written in vain, and the End of writing them, which was that we might obtain *eternal Life* by believing them, was wholly fruſtrated; but if that Faith were *ſufficient* to *eternal Life*, then theſe *written* Things which begot that Faith, and were the Object of it, muſt contain in them all Things *neceſſary* to *eternal Life*; for how can they beget in us a Faith that is *ſufficient* to *eternal Life*, unleſs they propoſe to our Faith all Things that are *neceſſary* thereunto?

And thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate from *Scripture* it self, which all agree is the *Word of God*, and consequently the most *concluding* Authority in the World, that the *Holy Scripture* is in it self a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to direct Men to *eternal Life*. And if this be so, I would fain know by what Warrant or Authority any Man, or *Church*, can pretend to obtrude upon the Faith of *Christians* any *unwritten Traditions*, or Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Worship, not *recorded* in *Scripture* as of *equal* Authority with those *recorded* in *Scripture*, and equally *necessary* to the *eternal* Happiness of Men. For that there have been such *bold* Imposers in the *Christian* World, *Irenæus* assures us in the 2d Chapter of his 2d Book against *Heresies*; where he tells us of a sort of *Hereticks* who taught, that *the Truth could not be found in the Scriptures by those to whom Tradition was unknown; for as much as it was not delivered by Writing, but by Word of Mouth.* And these Hereticks[1], as *Tertullian* observes, *confessed indeed that the Apostles were ignorant, and that they did not at all differ among themselves in their Preaching, but said they revealed not all Things unto all Men; some Things they taught openly and to all, some Things secretly, and to a few*; which *secret* Things were the *unwritten Traditions* which they sought to impose upon the Faith of *Christians*. And how far the *Church of Rome* it self doth in this matter tread in the Footsteps of these *ancient Hereticks*, is but *too notorious*: For thus in the Preface of their *Catechism* it is expressly affirmed by the *Council of Trent*, that *the whole*

[1] De Præscrip. Hæret. c. 25.

whole Doctrine to be delivered to the Faithful, is contained in the Word of God, which Word of God is diſtributed into Scripture and Tradition. And in the *Council* it ſelf they declare, and define, that *the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions are to be received and honoured with equal pious Affection and Reverence:* In which Words they expreſly own *another* Word of God beſides the *Scripture*, *viz. Tradition*, which they *equalize* with the *Scripture* it ſelf. And this is almoſt *verbatim* the very Aſſertion which both *Irenæus* and *Terullian* condemn for *Hereſy*; and as they are the ſame, ſo we find they are grounded on the ſame Authority: For thoſe very Texts of *Scripture* which thoſe *ancient* Hereticks urged for their *Tradition*, are urged by *Bellarmin* for the *Tradition* of his *Church*. Thus for their *Tradition*, as *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* acquaints us, they urged that of St. *Paul*, *We ſpeak Wiſdom among them that are perfect*; and alſo, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy truſt*; and again, *That good Thing which is committed to thee, keep:* All which Texts are urged by *Bellarmin* in his 4th and 5th Books *de Verbo Dei*, in behalf of that *Tradition* which the *Church of Rome* contends for: And 'tis ſomething hard that *that* which was damned for *Hereſy* in the *Primitive Church*, ſhould be made an *Article of Faith* in the *preſent Roman*. Not that we do diſallow of *Traditions* univerſally received in all *Churches* and Ages; for we frankly acknowledge that what is now contained in *Scripture* was *Tradition* before it was *Scripture*, as being *firſt* delivered by Word of Mouth before it was collected into Writing; and therefore whenſoever it can

be made evident to us that there are any *unwritten* Doctrines bearing the same Stamp of *Divine* Authority with those that are *written*, we are ready to receive them with the same Veneration as we do the *Scriptures* themselves. For it is not their being written that doth *authorize* them, but their being from *God*, and our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles*; and therefore when once it's made appear to us that *Christ* or his *Apostles* taught *so* and *so*, that is *sufficient* to command our Assent and Submission whether it be made appear from *Scripture* or *Tradition*. So that the Reason why we embrace *some* Doctrines and reject *others*, is not merely because the *one* are written, and the *other* not; but because to us, who live at so *great* a distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, it can never be made so evident, that what is not *written*, was taught by them, as what is. What is *written* hath been delivered down to us by the *unanimous Tradition* and Testimony of the *Church* of *Christ* in all Ages, which I am sure can never be justly pretended of any *one* of those *unwritten Traditions* which the *Church of Rome* now imposes upon the Faith of *Christians*. Let them but produce the same *unanimous* Testimony that any one of those *Twelve Articles* which they have thought meet to superadd to the *ancient Creeds*, was taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, as we do that what is contained in *Scripture* was so, and we will as readily embrace it as any Proposition in *Scripture*; but if *this* Article be neither to be found in *Scripture*, nor delivered down to us as taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, by the *unanimous* Testimony of the *Church* of *Christ* through all Ages, we must crave

their

their pardon if we cannot receive it as Part of the *Word of God.* But how *impoſſible* it is to prove by the *unanimous* Teſtimony of the *Church*, that any *unwritten* Doctrine is Part of the *Word of God neceſſary* to be believed by all *Chriſtians*, is evident from hence, becauſe for *ſeveral* Ages after our *Saviour* the *Church* unanimouſly taught, that whatſoever was *neceſſary* to be believed was contained in *Scripture*; and for the ſame *Church* at the ſame time to teſtify that *this* or *that unwritten* Doctrine is a Part of God's *Word neceſſary* to be believed, and yet that all Doctrines *neceſſary* to be believed are *written*, is plainly to contradict it ſelf. And yet we find the *Primitive Fathers* unanimouſly atteſting that the *Scripture* is the Rule from whence we draw all the Aſſertions of our Faith, the *laſt* Will and Teſtimony of our *Saviour* by which all Controverſies are to be decided, the Boundaries of the *Church*, out of which it is not to depart, the Touchſtone of Truth, the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith for the Time to come, and the only certain Principle of *Chriſtian* Doctrine and Demonſtration in Matters of Faith. Theſe are their *own* Expreſſions, and abundance more than theſe we meet with to the ſame purpoſe; and which is very obſervable, they not only aſſert the *Scripture* to be a *full* and *adequate* Rule of Faith, but ſeverely declaim againſt all Additions to it. Thus *Euſebius Pamphilus* in the Name of the *Fathers* of the *Council of Nice*, τοῖς γεγραμμένοις πιστεύειν, τὰ μὴ γεγραμμένα μὴ ἐνδιδόναι μηδὲ ζητεῖν; i. e. *thoſe Things which are written, believe; thoſe Things which are not written, neither think upon, nor enquire after.* Thus

alſo St. *Auſtin*, *Quicquid inde audieritis è Scripturâ ſacrâ, hoc vobis bene ſapiat; quicquid extra eſt, reſpuite, ne erretis in nebula: Whatſoever ye hear from the Holy Scriptures let it ſavour well with you; whatſoever is without them, refuſe, leſt ye wander in a Cloud.* St. *Bazil* declares, that *it is a manifeſt falling from the Faith, and an Argument of Arrogancy either to reject any point of thoſe Things that are written, or to bring in any of thoſe which are not written; and that it is the Property of a faithful Man to be fully perſwaded of the Truth of thoſe Things that are delivered in the Holy Scripture, and not to dare either to reject or to add any thing thereunto.* Thus *Tertullian*, adverſ. Hermog. *Si enim non eſt ſcriptum, timeat Væ illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus deſtinatum: If what he pretends be not written, let him fear that Woe that is denounced againſt ſuch as add or take away.* What Likelihood therefore is there that they who thus ſeverely forbid adding any thing to the *written Word of God*, did ever ſo much as dream of *another Word of God* conſiſting of *unwritten Traditions?* And indeed methinks it is very ſtrange if there had been any *other Word of God* beſides what is *written*, there ſhould no notice be taken of it in that which is *written*; eſpecially conſidering that if it be as *neceſſary* to be believed as the *Roman Church* defines it; it is as *neceſſary* that we ſhould have Direction where to find it, and how to know it when we have it; but of this we have not the *leaſt* Intimation in *Scripture*. For as for thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 15. *Hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epiſtle*, all that can be juſtly inferred from them is only this, that

that the *Theſſalonians* at the Writing of this Epiſtle had only an *Oral Tradition* of a *great* Part of that *Goſpel* which St. *Paul* had preached to them, the Goſpels being as yet either not collected into Writing, or not diſperſed abroad into the Churches; ſo that then *this*, and his *former* Epiſtle to them, were perhaps the only *written* Part of the *New Teſtament* that was yet arrived to their hands; and if ſo, then this Command of *holding the Traditions by word*, did oblige no longer than till they had received the *written Goſpel*; becauſe then thoſe *Traditions* by Word were all recorded in *Scripture*, and being there recorded, they were thenceforth obliged to hold them as *Scripture*, and no longer as *Traditions* by Word. But ſuppoſing there are ſtill *unwritten Traditions* in the Church that are not in *Scripture*, but yet were delivered by *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles*, and ſo are equally the *Word of God* with the *Scripture*; I would fain know how we who live at ſo *great* a diſtance from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, ſhould either know where to find, or be aſſured that they are ſuch when we have them. We know very well that even in the *Primitive* Ages there were ſundry *counterfeit Traditions* which *Hereticks* pretended to derive from *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*; and if it were ſo *eaſy* a matter to counterfeit *Traditions* then, how much more *eaſy* is it now? I confeſs *Vincentius Lirinenſis* gives us a very *good* Rule how to diſtinguiſh *counterfeit* from *true Traditions*; *Quod ubiq; quod ſemper, quod ab omnibus creditum eſt, hoc eſt vere proprieq; Catholicum*: *That which was every where, and always, and by all Chriſtians believed, that is truly and properly Catholick.*

lick. And by this Rule we are willing to abide; if they can ſhew us any Article of *Chriſtianity* not recorded in *Scripture*, which hath been every where, and always believed by all *Chriſtians*, we will readily admit it as an *unwritten Word of God*, and with the ſame Reſpect and Reverence as we do that which is *written*: But this we are fully aſſured they will never be able to perform, ſeeing, as was ſhewn before, the *Primitive Church* doth with *one* Conſent atteſt the *Scripture* to be an *entire* Rule of Faith, in which all the Articles of *Chriſtianity* are contained.

But we are told that for theſe *unwritten Traditions* we muſt rely upon the *preſent Church* of every Age, and receive as a *divine* Tradition whatſoever ſhe defines to be ſo; where by the *preſent Church* is meant the *preſent Roman Church*; that is to ſay, whatſoever *this Church* defines we muſt believe it, becauſe ſhe defines it; which we cannot but think is a *hard* Caſe; *Firſt*, Becauſe we know very well that the *Roman Church* is at *beſt* but a Part of the *Church univerſal*, and we know no Right that any *Part* hath to impoſe upon the *Whole*, and to oblige it to believe whatſoever ſhe propoſes, meerly becauſe ſhe propoſes it. *Secondly*, Becauſe in Fact we are very well aſſured that the *Roman Church* is ſo far from being a *ſincere* Preſerver of *Tradition*, that there is no *Church* in the World hath more ſtudiouſly attempted to counterfeit and deprave it; of which *innumerable* Inſtances are given by our Authors, many of which are now acknowledged even by their Authors to be *true*. For even their *Vulgar Latin Edition* of the *Bible* it ſelf, which they prefer before

fore the *Originals*, is confeſſed by themſelves to abound with *manifeſt* Errors and Corruptions; and even to the very *Canon* of the *Bible* they have added *ſundry Apocryphal Books* which we certainly know the *Primitive Tradition* never admitted as Parts of the *ſacred Scripture*; and it is notorious to all the World how many Books and Writings they have forged, and how many of the Writings of the *Ancients* they have *gelded* and *interpolated* to defend and ſupport thoſe *pretended Traditions* which they have impoſed upon the World as Articles of Faith. And after ſhe hath been guilty of ſo many *apparent* Falſifications, we cannot but think it a very *hard* Caſe that we ſhould ſtill be obliged to believe her upon her own *bare* Word. For in the *third* Place, at this rate of Proceeding we muſt in many Inſtances condemn the *Traditions* of the *Primitive Church* in Complement to thoſe of the *preſent Roman*; which if we believe *our own* Eyes, and the moſt *authentick* Hiſtories and Records of thoſe Times, do expreſly thwart and contradict *one another*; and ſince, if we would never ſo fain we can never believe both Parts of a Contradiction, we muſt in believing the *one* give the Lye to the *other*. Nay, *Fourthly* and laſtly, though we ſhould be perſwaded, as we think we have Reaſon to be, that many of the *Traditions* of the *preſent Church of Rome* are not only not mentioned in *Scripture*, but directly contrary to it; (as for Inſtance, their performing *Divine Service* in an *unknown* Tongue, which we think is as *contrary* to 1 *Cor.* 14. as *one* Propoſition can be to *another*:) yet if that *Churches* Definitions do by their *own* Autho-

Authority oblige our Faith, we must believe her against *Scripture* it self. And this we think *intollerable*, that any *Church* or *Christian* should be obliged to believe the *unwritten Word* of the *Church of Rome* in a Matter wherein, upon the most *diligent* and *impartial* Search, they are verily perswaded it contradicts the *written Word of God*; and if the Sentence of the *one* or *t'other* must be made *void*, we think it is very *reasonable* that the Voice of her *pretended unwritten Word* should be silenced by that more *certain* one of the *lively Oracles of God*. But after all, if what I have endeavoured to prove be proved, *viz.* that the *Holy Scriptures* are a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to conduct us to *eternal Life*, this will be enough to evacuate all that is pretended for this *unwritten Word of God*. For *God* and Nature we know do nothing in vain; and therefore *if one Word of God* be *sufficient*, *viz.* that which is *written*, what need have we of this *other* which is *unwritten?* And so I have done with the *first necessary* Property of a Rule of Faith, *viz.* that it be *full*; and shewn at large that the *Holy Scripture* is so as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore shall now proceed to

II. The *Second*, *viz.* That it be *clear* and *intelligible* to those whose Faith and Manners are to be regulated by it.

I do not mean when I say that the *Scripture* is *clear*, and *plain*, and *intelligible* to all those to whom it is a Rule of Faith and Manners, that it is throughout so in all its Proposals. For it cannot be denied but there are many Things not only in

in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, but alſo in *other* Parts of *Scripture*, *hard to be underſtood*; and ſuch as do not only exceed the Apprehenſion of *common* Capacities; but alſo puzzle the Underſtandings of the moſt *acute* and *profound* Enquirers. But that which I aſſert is this, That all thoſe Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Manners which are *neceſſary* for Men to believe and practiſe in order to their Attainment of *eternal* Life, are ſo plainly and clearly revealed in *Scripture* that there is no *honeſt teachable* Mind that is *capable* of underſtanding *common* Senſe, but may from thence receive *full* Information of them upon *faithful* and *diligent* Enquiry. And though in *ſome* Texts theſe *Neceſſaries* are not ſo plainly propoſed as in *others*, yet in *ſome* Text or *other* they are all of them ſo plainly propoſed that no Man can read the *Scripture*, and ſtill be *ignorant* of them without being wilfully *blind*; for which there is no Remedy either *in* the Scripture, or *out* of it. And this I ſhall endeavour to prove,

1. From the *expreſs* Teſtimony of *Scripture*.
2. From the *avowed* Deſign of writing the *Scripture*.
3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture*.
4. From the Obligation that lies upon us under Pain of Damnation to believe, and receive all thoſe *Neceſſaries* to Salvation contained in it.

1. From the *expreſs* Teſtimony of *Scripture* it is evident, that in all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation at leaſt the *Scripture* is *clear* and *plain*. For to be ſure

ſure if in any thing the *Scripture* be *plain*, it is in thoſe Things that are moſt *neceſſary* to be believed and known; and therefore if it be *obſcure* in theſe Things, we may reaſonably preſume it is *plain* in nothing: But that it is in many Things plain and eaſy to be underſtood, is evident from its *own* Teſtimony: For thus of the *Moſaick* Law it is expreſly affirmed by *Moſes*, *This Commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off*, *Deut.* 30. 11. Where *Moſes* ſpeaks not only of the *Ten Commandments*, which conſiſting for the moſt part of Laws of Nature, are upon that Account more *eaſy* to be underſtood; but of all the Commandments of *Moſes* in general, whether *Ceremonial*, *Judicial*, or *Natural*. For ſo, *v.* 16. *This Commandment*, we find, contains as well the Statutes and Judgments, as the Commandments of the Law, all which muſt take in the whole *Moſaick* Inſtitution. And accordingly, *Pſ.* 119. 105. *David* calls this *Word of God, a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*; which how could it be if it did not burn *clear* enough to guide and direct him? and if it did, then to be ſure it burnt clear enough to direct him in thoſe Things wherein it was moſt *neceſſary* for him to be directed. Again in the 19th *Pſ.* 7, 8. we are told, that *the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple*; and that *the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes*. But how can any Law make the *ſimple*, *wiſe*, or enlighten the Eyes of Men, unleſs it be ſo plainly and clearly delivered as that the *ſimple* may be capable of apprehending, and the Eyes of Men of diſcerning the Senſe of it? I know it is objected by *Bellarmin*,

min, that these Words do only imply that this Law indeed being understood, doth enlighten Mens Eyes, and direct their Practice; but by no means that it is *plain* and *easy* to be understood. But this is a *meer* Cavil; for it's plain that it is by understanding the Law, that the *simple* are made *wise*, and the Eyes of Men enlightned. If therefore this Law be so *obscure* in its self as that it cannot make it self understood by all that sincerely enquire into it, how is it *possible* that it should make them *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of their Minds? But it's plain that the Intent of those Passages of *David* was to excite, and encourage Men to study and observe the Law: But what though the Law makes the *simple*, wise, when they understand it? what Encouragement is this for the *simple* to study it, if it be so *obscure* that they cannot understand it? And since they must understand it before they can observe it, what Encouragement doth this Consideration give them to observe it that it will make them *wise* when they understand it, if it be not plain enough for them to understand it? But then that forecited Passage of *Moses* doth in *express* Words contradict this Cavil of *Bellarmin*; for he tells the People that *the Commandment he gave them was not hidden from them*; whereas if it had been so obscurely delivered to them by *Moses*, that upon their *sincere* and *diligent* Enquiry they could not understand it, it is certain that it had been still hidden from them how *wise* soever it might make them when they did understand it: And to say that such a Proposition will make me *wise* when I do understand it, is no Argument at all that it is not hidden from

from me if it be ſo obſcurely expreſſed as that upon my *ſincere* Enquiry I am not capable of underſtanding it. But that the *Old Teſtament* at leaſt in all *neceſſary* Matters was *plain* enough even to *common* Capacities, is evident from the *frequent* Appeals our *Saviour* makes to it in his Conteſts with the *Common People* of the *Jews*. Thus in the Text he bids them, *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which teſtify of me*; and in *other* Places, *What ſaith the Scripture?* and *doth not the Scripture* ſay ſo and ſo? Now how *impertinent* would it have been for our *Saviour* thus to appeal to it at the Tribunal of the People, if he thought it ſo *obſcure* that the People were not *capable* of underſtanding it? How *trifling* would it be for a Man to appeal to *Suarez*'s *Metaphyſicks* in a Controverſy with a *Plow-man*, or to refer him to *Euclid's Elements* for the determining the Bounds and Meaſures of a Field?

And as from what hath been ſaid, 'tis apparent that the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* were at leaſt in all Neceſſaries *plain* and *clear* to the *Jews*; ſo it is no *leſs* evident that the *Scripture* of the *New Teſtament* are ſo to *Chriſtians*, ſince it gives the ſame Teſtimony to it ſelf of its *own* Clearneſs, as the *Old Teſtament* doth. For thus, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2, 3, 4. the Apoſtle tells us, that they did not *handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the Truth, commending themſelves to Mens Conſciences in the ſight of God. But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine*

ſhine unto them. Suppoſing then that they wrote with the ſame Plainneſs and Clearneſs with which they ſpake, (which there is no ſhadow of Reaſon to doubt of) then from theſe Words it is evident; *Firſt*, That they did neither in their Preaching nor Writings affect to diſcourſe dubiouſly or obſcurely, but that their *great* Deſign was ſo to manifeſt and make known the Truth as that by their Plainneſs and Simplicity they might recommend themſelves to the Conſciences of all that heard or read them: *Secondly*, That in Fact they had in their Sermons and Writings ſo clearly taught the *Goſpel*, that if after all it remained *hidden* or *obſcure* to any, it was only to ſuch as were *loſt* and *irrecoverable*. *Thirdly*, That *that* which render'd the *Goſpel* which they had taught and written, *hidden* or *obſcure* to ſuch, was not the Obſcurity either of the Matter which they taught, or of their Manner of teaching it, but their own *worldly* Affections which blinded their Eyes, and hinder'd them from ſeeing that which in it ſelf was illuſtriouſly *viſible*. Which is an *unanſwerable* Evidence of the Clearneſs and Plainneſs of the Scriptures of the *New Teſtament* in all *neceſſary* Things; for if they are *clear* to all but ſuch as wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt them, they are as *clear* as they need be to *honeſt* and *teachable* Minds; for there is nothing can be clear enough to ſuch, as are not willing to underſtand. And accordingly the *Goſpel*, which the Apoſtle calls *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, is ſaid to have *appeared*, or ſhone forth, *to all Men*; *teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in*

this preſent World, *Tit.* 2. 11. Now if the *Goſpel* did ſhine forth unto all Men, it muſt be in the *Sermons* and *Diſcourſes* of thoſe that had preached it to the World; and if they *ſo* preached it as that it ſhone forth to all Men, they muſt neceſſarily have preached it very plainly and clearly: Either therefore it was wrote as it was preached, or it was not; if it was not, it was not wrote truly and ſincerely; if it was, it was wrote very plainly, ſo as to make it appear and ſhine forth to all that read it. 'Tis true, there are ſome Things *obſcure* both in the *Old Scriptures* and *New*; but then theſe are ſuch Things as are no Parts of the *Neceſſaries* and *Eſſentials* of *Religion*; ſuch Things as Men may be ſafely *ignorant* of, or be *miſtaken* about, without any Hazard of their *eternal* Life. For all that the *fore-cited* Teſtimonies prove is only this, that *that true Religion* by which *God* governs the Faith and Manners of Men, is ſo far forth as it is *neceſſary* to be believed and practiſed, plainly and clearly revealed to them in the *Holy Scriptures*. But beſides this, all Men agree there are a *great* many *other* Things revealed in *Holy Scripture*, which, becauſe they are not *neceſſary* for all Men to underſtand, are many of them not ſo plainly revealed as that all Men may underſtand them. But ſince the *Scripture* was written to teach and inſtruct Men, to be ſure it teaches them moſt plainly that which is moſt *neceſſary* for them to know; and therefore ſince there are ſome Things plainly taught in *Scripture*, as is evident to any one that reads it, to be ſure among theſe Things are contained all that is *neceſſary* for Men to know and underſtand.

2. From

2. From the *avowed* Deſign of writing the *Scripture* it is alſo evident that in all Things *neceſſary* it is *plain* and *clear*. For thus concerning the *Old Teſtament*, St. *Paul* tells us that *whatſoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, *Rom.* 15. 4. And if they were written for our Learning and Inſtruction, to be ſure they were ſo written as to teach and inſtruct us, that is, plainly and clearly, eſpecially as to thoſe Things wherein we have moſt need to be inſtructed. And then as for the *New Teſtament*, St. *Luke* tells his *Theophilus*, that the Reaſon of his writing his *Goſpel* was that he might know the certainty of thoſe Things that were ſurely believed among *Chriſtians*, and wherein he himſelf had been inſtructed; And if it were to aſſertain us of the Principles of *Chriſtianity* that he wrote his *Goſpel*, certainly he would take care to write it after ſuch a Manner as that thoſe that read it might underſtand it, otherwiſe he muſt run counter to his *own* Deſign. Thus alſo St. *John* ſaith, that he wrote his *Goſpel* that Men might *believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God*; but how could his *Goſpel* induce Men to believe This, unleſs it be ſo *written* as that Men may underſtand it? And ſo alſo for his Epiſtles he tells us, that he wrote them that *they that believed in Jeſus might know that they have eternal Life, and that they may believe*, or continue to believe, *on the Name of the Son of God:* And if this were his End, to be ſure he would take care to write ſo as that they might underſtand; otherwiſe how could they know by his Writing that

they had *eternal Life*, or be moved thereby to continue to believe on the name of Jesus? For there is nothing can create in Men either Knowledge or Faith, but what they understand. Seeing therefore the *great* End of Writing the *Scripture* was to instruct the World in the *great* Things of *Religion*, either we must say that both the Writers of the *Scripture*, and the *Holy Ghost* that inspired them were *defective* in Skill, or in Care so to write as to obtain this End; or that their Writings are an *effectual* Means to obtain it, which it is *impossible* for them to be, unless they are *plain* and *clear* as to the *great* Things of *Religion*. In short evey *wise* Agent pursues his End by the most *proper* and *effectual* Means; and I would fain know whether to write plainly or obscurely be the most *proper* Means to instruct Men by Writing; if to write plainly, then either the *Apostles* wrote so, or they were not *wise* Agents, since to instruct was the *great* End of their Writing. The most *natural* Way of conveying to Mens Minds the Notices of Things is by Words either *spoken* or *written*, and seeing whatsoever can be *spoken* in *plain* and *intelligible* Words may be *written* in the same Words, there can be no doubt but those Words will be as *intelligible* when they are *written*, as when they are *spoken*; for why should the same Words be more *obscure* when conveyed to us by our Eyes, than when conveyed to us by our Ears? Seeing then the Sense of *Scripture* may be as plainly conveyed by Words *written* as by Words *spoken*, and seeing that even those who deny the Plainness of *Scripture* do yet allow that the Sense of it may be plainly convey-

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ed by Words ſpoken, or which is the ſame thing, *Oral Tradition*; if the *Scripture* be not *plain* it can be reſolved into no *other* Reaſon but this that *God* would not have it ſo; for there is no Doubt but he could have *ſpoken* as plainly as Men, and have *written* as plainly as he ſpoke; and therefore if he hath not done ſo, it was becauſe he would not; but to ſay that he would not write thoſe Things plainly which he thought *neceſſary* for all Men to know, and which he wrote on purpoſe that all Men might know, is to ſay that he would, and would not at the ſame time; or that he wrote them on purpoſe that Men might know them, and yet that he wrote ſo as that they might not know them.

3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture* it is alſo evident, that in all *neceſſary* Things it is *plain* and *clear*. That *God* doth not only allow, but will and require us to read the *Scripture*, I ſhall ſhew at large hereafter, when I come to treat of *ſearching the Scripture*. Suppoſing therefore at preſent the Thing to be *true*, I would fain know to what Purpoſe ſhould *God* require us to read the *Scripture*, if in thoſe things which are *neceſſary* for Men to know and believe, it be not *plain* and *intelligible*. Doth *God* require us to read it, for the ſake of reading it, or for the ſake of underſtanding it? If the *former*, reading any *other* Book might as well have anſwered God's End as reading the *Scripture*; becauſe reading is reading whatſoever it be that we read; if the *later*, then either the *Scripture* is *plain* and *intelligible* as to all thoſe Things which he requires us to underſtand, or he re-

quires us to read it in vain. For to what Purpoſe ſhould we read that we may underſtand, if that which we are to read be not *plain* enough to be underſtood by us? As for Inſtance; the *Bereans*, *Acts* 17. 11. are highly commended for *ſearching the Scriptures daily*; now I would fain know was this a Virtue in them, or was it not? If not, why are they commended for it; if it were, it was certainly their Duty. What was the Intendment of it; was it only that they might be expert Readers? Why are they ſo commended for reading the *Scriptures* above any *other* Book, ſeeing that reading any *other* Book would have done as well for that Purpoſe as reading the *Scriptures*? But the Text it ſelf tells us that the Intendment of their reading the *Scripture* was *that they might know whether thoſe things were ſo* or no which St. *Paul* had preached to them; but how ſhould they know this by reading the *Scripture*, if the *Scripture* which they read were not *plain* enough to be underſtood by them? Again St. *Paul* gives this as a *great* Commendation of his Son *Timothy*, that *from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures*; whence by the Way we may learn that it is not ſo *great* a Reproach to our *Church* as the *Romaniſts* intend it, for that we permit *Women* and *Children*, *Tinkers* and *Cobblers* to read the *Scripture*. But I pray, what was the Meaning of *Timothy*'s knowing the *Holy Scripture from a Child*? Was it that he knew the Words of it only, or the Senſe of it alſo? If the *former*, a *Parrot* may be taught as much as *Timothy* had learned, and conſequently deſerve as *high* a Commendation as he; if the *later*, then it ſeems the *Scripture* is *plain* enough

for

for a well-disposed Child to know the Sense of it so far forth at least as it is *necessary* to be known, and this is as much as we desire. If therefore *God* requires us to read the *Scripture*, as *Timothy* did, to the End that we may know and understand it as he did, then either we may understand the Sense of it by reading it, or else *God* requires us to read it in vain.

4. And lastly; From the Obligation we lie under upon Pain of Damnation to believe and receive those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident that as to all those *Necessaries* it is *plain* and *clear*. That we are obliged to believe under Pain of Damnation all that the *Scripture* proposes as *necessary* to our Salvation, is agreed on all hands; but how can Men be justly obliged to believe such Things as are *obscure*, and *doubtful*, and *uncertain*, and of which they can have no *certain* Knowledge? Either the *Necessaries* to Salvation must be plainly and clearly expres'd in *Scripture*, or we have not *sufficient* Reason to believe them; and to say *God* will damn us for not believing those Things which he hath not given us *sufficient* Reason to believe, is to charge him with the most *outragious* Oppression and Injustice. But we are told that though *God* hath not clearly revealed to us in *Scripture* those Things which he hath obliged us to believe upon Pain of Damnation, yet he hath left us *sufficient* Reason to believe them; for he hath left us to the Conduct of an *infallible Church*, that is to say, of the *present Church of Rome* in all Ages, whom he hath *authorized* to explain and define to us all Things that are *necessary* to be believed,

which we are to receive upon her Authority, and not upon the *Scriptures*; ſo that if we firmly believe what She defines and propoſes to us, we are ſure to believe all Things that are *neceſſary* to be believed. Now in Anſwer to this Objection, which indeed is the *great* Foundation that the Faith of thoſe of the *preſent Church of Rome* relies on, I deſire theſe Things may be ſeriouſly conſidered.

1. That before we can reaſonably rely upon the Authority of the *preſent Church of Rome* in defining and propoſing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *ſundry* Things that we muſt believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

2. That theſe Things which we muſt believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, are at *leaſt* as obſcurely revealed in *Scripture* as any *other* Article of our *Chriſtian* Faith.

3. That after all theſe Things, upon our relying on that *Church*'s Authority, we are left to the *ſame* or *greater* Uncertainties than upon our relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

4. That in relying upon the Authority of *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than juſt what is *neceſſary* to render our Faith *vertuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of *that Church*, ſuppoſing it to be a *certain* Ground, as it is pretended, our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of *Virtue* in it.

1. That before we can reaſonably rely upon the Authority of *that Church* in defining and propoſing

poſing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *ſundry* Things that we muſt believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*. As for Inſtance; we muſt in the *firſt* Place believe that there is a *Church*, or Society of *Chriſtians* ſeparated from the World, or incorporated by a *peculiar Divine* Charter. Now whether there be ſuch a *Church* or no is a Queſtion that muſt be reſolved by the *Scripture*, and not by the *Church*; becauſe to believe that there is a *Church* becauſe the *Church* ſaith there is a *Church*, is to take that for granted which is the Thing in Queſtion. *Secondly*, We muſt believe that this *Church* hath Authority to define and propoſe to us the Articles of our Faith, which muſt alſo for the ſame Reaſon be believed on the Authority of the *Scripture*, and not of the *Church*. For to believe that there is a *Church* that hath Authority to propoſe to us the Articles of our Faith, is to believe that there is a *Church* which we are obliged to believe; and how can I believe this upon the *Church*'s Authority, unleſs I can believe it before I do believe it? *Thirdly*, Before we can rely upon this *Church*'s Authority in defining and propoſing to us the Articles of our Faith, we muſt believe that this *Church* is *infallible*; for if ſhe be not *infallible*, how is it *conſiſtent* with the Truth of *God* to oblige us to believe Her, ſeeing in ſo doing he muſt oblige us whenſoever She errs to believe her Errors? but that She is *infallible* is not to be believed upon her *own* Authority; for then her *infallible* Authority muſt be the Reaſon of our Belief that She is *infallible*, that is, we muſt believe her *infallible*, becauſe we believe

her

her *infallible*. Seeing then we cannot believe it on her *own* Authority, if we believe it at all, it muſt be upon the Authority of *Scripture*. *Fourthly*, Before we can rely upon the *Church of Rome*'s Authority to define to us the Articles of our Faith, we muſt believe the *Church of Rome* to be this *infallible* Church: But ſeeing this is no *ſelf-evident* Principle, we muſt have ſome *other* Evidence beſides her ſelf to induce us to believe it; and what elſe can that be but *Scripture*? We are told indeed by ſome of her *greateſt Divines*, that there are *certain* Marks and Notes of a *true Church* peculiar to the *Church of Rome*, by which we are obliged to believe Her the *true Church*; ſuch as *Antiquity*, *Univerſality*, *Holineſs of Doctrine*, &c. But ſeeing no Doctrine can be *holy* that is not *true*, we muſt be ſatisfied that *that Church* is *true* before we can know that it is *holy*; ſo that before we can reaſonably ſubmit to her Athority, we muſt be very well aſſured that her Doctrine is *true*, and this we cannot be aſſured of by her Authority, becauſe that as yet is the Matter in Queſtion; and therefore we can be no otherwiſe aſſured of it, but only by the Authority of *Scripture*; and when we are aſſured beforehand by the Authority of *Scripture* that her Doctrines are *true*, her Authority comes *too* late to aſſure us. Seeing therefore it is evident that there are ſome, if not all the Articles of the *Roman Faith* that muſt be known and believed by us upon the Authority of *Scripture* before we can ſafely rely upon her Authority to define them to us, how can we be obliged to ſettle our Faith upon her Authority, when as before we can reaſonably admit

admit her Authority, we muſt believe ſeveral of the Articles of our Faith upon the Authority of *Scripture?* For I would fain know, are theſe Articles of Faith, or no? *That there is a Church; that this Church hath Authority to define the Articles of our Faith, and that in ſo defining, this Church is infallible, and that this infallible Church is the Church of Rome?* If they be, as they themſelves own they are, then there are ſome Articles it ſeems that muſt be believed without the *Church*'s Authority upon the *ſingle* Authority of *Scripture*; and if *ſome*, why not *all?* why ſhould not the *Scripture* be as *ſufficient* to *authorize* us to believe the Reſt as theſe, ſince its Authority is as *great* in *one* Text as in *another?* Eſpecially conſidering

2. That theſe Things which we muſt believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome*, are at leaſt as obſcurely revealed in *Scripture* as any *other* Article of our *Chriſtian* Faith. The *great* Reaſon urged by the *Romaniſts* againſt our Relyance upon the *Scripture* for our Faith is the Obſcurity of it; and if this be a *good* Reaſon it proves a *great* deal more than they would have it, *viz.* that we ought not to rely upon *Scripture* even for thoſe Articles, without believing of which we can have no *ſufficient* Ground to rely upon the Authority of their *Church*. For I would fain know, is it *clear* and *plain* from Scripture that the *preſent Catholick Church* of every Age hath Authority to define the Articles of Faith, and that in all its Definitions it is *infallible?* and that the *preſent Church of Rome* is this *Catholick Church?* If ſo; how come thoſe Texts upon which thoſe

Articles

Articles are founded to be underſtood in a quite *different* Senſe, not only by us, but by the *greateſt* Part of the *Primitive Fathers*, as hath been abundantly proved by *Proteſtant* Writers? Suppoſing that we ſhould be ſo *blinded* by our Partiality to *our own* Tenets as to miſapprehend *plain* and *clear* Expreſſions of *Scripture*, it is very *ſtrange* methinks that the *Fathers* who were never engaged in the Controverſy, and ſo could not be biaſs'd either *one* way or *t'other*, ſhould yet miſapprehend them too. What is this but to ſay that let Men be never ſo *indifferent*, yet they may be eaſily miſtaken in the Senſe of very *plain* and *clear* Expreſſions; and if ſo, what ſignifies either Speaking or Writing? But to proceed to ſome Inſtances; will any *modeſt* Man in the World affirm that the *Church of Rome's infallibility* in defining Articles of Faith to all *ſucceeding* Generations is more plainly expreſt in thoſe Words of our *Saviour*, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, than the *Divinity* of our *Saviour* is in the Beginning of the *firſt* Chaper of St. *John*'s Goſpel, where it is expreſly affirmed that he is *God*, whereas in the *other* there is not the leaſt mention either of the *Church of Rome*, or of *Infallibility*, or defining Articles of Faith? Why may we not then as well depend upon the *one* Text for the Article of our *Saviour*'s *Divinity*, as upon the *other* for that of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility?* Again, are there not *innumerable* Texts of Scripture wherein the Articles of *Remiſſion of Sin*, *the Reſurrection of the Dead*, *the laſt Judgment*, *and the World to come* are at leaſt as plainly expreſt as the

the *preſent Church of Rome's Infallibility* is in any of thoſe Texts that are urged in the Defence of it? and therefore if we believe the *later* upon the Authority of *Scripture*, notwithſtanding the pretended Obſcurity of it, why may we not as well upon the ſame Authority believe all the *former*, ſince the *former* are at leaſt as plainly expreſt as the *later*? Either therefore the *Scripture* is *plain* enough to be relyed upon as to *this* Article of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*, or it is not; if it be not, we have no Ground for our Dependence upon the Authority of her Definitions and Propoſals; if it be, it's *plain* enough to be relyed upon in all other *neceſſary* Articles of Faith, ſince theſe are all as plainly at leaſt expres'd in *Scripture* as that. For if we may not rely upon *Scripture* becauſe it is not *plain*, then where it is equally *plain*, it is equally to be relyed on.

3. That when we come to rely upon this *Church*'s Authority, we are expoſed to far *greater* Uncertainties than while we relied upon the Authority of *Scripture*. For in the *firſt* place, we are of all ſides agreed that the *Scripture* is *infallible*, and that *ſuch* and *ſuch* Writings are Parts of *Scripture*; and therefore are abſolutely *ſecure* that if we follow the *true* Senſe of it, it cannot miſlead us. But the much *greater* Part of *Chriſtians* deny that the *Church of Rome* is infallible; even the *Church of Rome* it ſelf owns the Authority we rely on to be *infallible*, but all *Chriſtians* all the World over, beſides thoſe of her *own* Communion, diſallow *hers* to be ſo; and to forſake our Dependence upon an *Infallibility* which *all* own, to rely upon

upon an *Infallibility* which but *few* in Compariſon admit, is certainly a very *dangerous* Venture. And then *Secondly*, As for the *Infallibility* of *Scripture* we are *certain* where to find it; *viz.* in every Text, and in every Propoſition therein contained, which being all the *Word of God*, muſt be all *infallible*. But as for the *Infallibility* of the *Roman Church*, as they have handled the Matter, it is almoſt as *difficult* to find as to prove it; ſome cry, lo it is here; and ſome, lo it is there; ſome place it in the *Pope* only, others in the *Pope* and his *College* of *Cardinals*; ſome in the *Pope* preſiding in a *General Council*, others in a *General Council* whether the *Pope* preſide in it, or no. So that in this *Church*, it ſeems, there is *Infallibility* ſomewhere, but what are we the better for it if we know not where to find it? If we go to the *Pope* for it; there have been *two* or *three Popes* at once that have decreed againſt *one another*; and therefore *one* or *t'other* of them to be ſure were miſtaken. How then ſhall we know which is the *true infallible* one? And when I have found the *true Pope*, others tell me I am not yet arrived at the Seat of *Infallibility* until I have found him in his *College* of *Cardinals*; and when I have found him here I am ſtill to ſeek, ſeeing I find the ſame *Pope* (*Eugenius the Fourth* for Inſtance) decreeing *one* Thing in his *College* of *Cardinals*, and the quite *contrary* in a *general Council*; and therefore I am ſure he could not be *infallible* in both. Therefore others ſend me to the *Pope* in a *General Council*; but when I come thither, I find my ſelf at a Loſs again; becauſe I meet with ſeveral Inſtances of *one Pope*'s defining *one* Thing in *one*

General

General Council, and *another* Pope, the quite *contrary* in *another*; and therefore in *one* or *t'other Council* I am ſure, the *one* or *t'other Pope* was miſtaken. And as for *General Councils* themſelves there are *ſundry* of them which are owned by *ſome*, and rejected by *others* of the *principal* Doctors of the *Roman Communion*. And even when *Councils* are legally aſſembled, there are ſo many *nice* Diſputes among them, what it is that makes them *General*, and when it is that they act *Conciliariter* as they call it, that is, ſo as to render their Decrees perpetually and univerſally obliging; that though we were reſolved to build our Faith upon the Authority of *this Church*, yet if we will uſe that Caution in believing that we ought to do in a Matter of ſo *great* Moment, we ſhould find our ſelves involved in *greater* Uncertainties concerning theſe Things than we are concerning the Senſe even of the moſt *difficult* Places of *Scripture*. But then *Thirdly*, When we are paſs'd over all theſe Difficulties we are ſtill at as *great* a Loſs to underſtand what is the Senſe of the *Church* to be believed by us, as what is the Senſe of *Scripture*. For the *Church* hath no *other* way to deliver her Senſe to us but either by *Oral Tradition*, that is, by Word of Mouth; or by *Writing*; If She deliver her Senſe to me by *Oral Tradition*, how can I know what that is who never heard Her ſpeak either in its *diffuſed* Body, or in a *General Council*, or in any *other* Repreſentative; unleſs it be that of my own *Pariſh-Prieſt* perhaps, who for all I know may be *Ignorant* or *Heretical*, and ſo either not underſtand himſelf the Church's *Oral Tradition*, or wilfully pervert

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it to a *contrary* Meaning? And if the *Church* deliver her Senſe to me by Writing, as She hath done in the *written* Decrees of her *General Councils*, muſt I read over all her Decrees? How ſhould I do that who underſtand not ſo much as the Languages in which they are written? Or ſuppoſe they were Tranſlated, how ſhall I know that they are faithfully render'd any more than I do that the *Scripture* is ſo? But ſuppoſe I were *certain* of this, and ſhould thereupon proceed to read them, alaſs, I find in them a *great* many *difficult* and *dubious* Expreſſions, yea, and at leaſt *ſeeming* Contradictions to *each other*; how then can I be more *certain* of the *true* Senſe of theſe Writings than of the Senſe of the Writings of *Scripture?* But you will ſay, the *Church* hath digeſted her Senſe of all her Articles of Faith into a *plain Creed* and *Catechiſm*, *viz.* that of the *Council of Trent*, whereby the *plaineſt* Reader may without any *laborious* Enquiries be readily inſtructed what he ought to believe. This I confeſs is ſomething; but as for thoſe Articles of Faith wherein *We* and the *Church of Rome* are agreed, we find them as plainly expreſsed in *Scripture* as in that *Creed* and *Catechiſm*; and therefore we have Reaſon to believe that if thoſe Articles wherein we diſagree had ever been intended for Articles of Faith, they would have been as plainly expreſs'd there as theſe; but 'tis no wonder we ſhould not find them plainly expreſs'd *there*, when we cannot find them expreſs'd *there* at all. But do we not find that the Scriptures even in the *plaineſt* Expreſſions of Articles of Faith have yet been perverted by *Hereticks*, into a *contrary* Mean-

Meaning? And what then? Are not the Words of *Councils* as liable to be perverted into a *contrary* Meaning as the Words of *Scripture?* For do not the *Roman* Doctors differ as much about the Senſe of their *Councils*, as we do about the Senſe of our *Scriptures*? Yea and have we not a *notorious* Inſtance of it at this very Day? For what can be more *contrary* than *Belarmine*'s Expoſition of the *Trent Faith*, and the *Biſhop* of *Condom*'s? And yet both allowed by the *Pope*, who by the Authority of that *Council* is made *ſole* Arbitrator of the Senſe of it. But then *Fourthly* and laſtly, As to the Senſe of *Scripture* our Reliance on the Authority of that *Church* leaves us at as *great* an Uncertainty as it found us. For where the *Scripture* deſigns to ſpeak plainly, as it doth in all Things *neceſſary* to ſalvation, the *Church* cannot ſpeak *plainer*; and therefore there we may underſtand the *Scripture* as well without the *Church* as with it; but where it doth not ſpeak plainly, the *Church of Rome* hath left us no *infallible* Commentary whereby to underſtand it; ſo that where the *Scripture* is *plain* She hath not made it *plainer*, and where it is *obſcure* She hath left it as *obſcure* as ever: So that after all the Noiſe that is made of *Infallibility* her Doctors are fain to apply themſelves to the ſame Methods of Underſtanding *Scripture*, that is, to conſult the Senſe of *Antiquity*, and compare Text with Text, and the like that we *fallible* Proteſtants do; and when they have done all, are as *lyable* to be miſtaken as we. Nay they themſelves confeſs that even *General Councils* themſelves may be miſtaken in their Applications of *Scripture*; that is, that they may miſapply them to *wrong* Purpoſes, which they cannot do without miſtak-

ing the Sense of them, of which there are a *great* many *notorious* Instances in the *second Council of Nice*; which to prove it the Duty of *Christians* to worship *Images*, urges God's taking Clay, and making Man after his *own* Image; and likewise that of *Esay*, *There shall be a Sign and Testimony to the Lord in the Land of Egypt*; and also those Passages of *David*, *Confession and Beauty is before him. Lord I have loved the beauty of thy House. O Lord my Face hath sought for thee. O Lord I will seek after thy Countenance. O Lord, the light of thy Countenance is sealed over us.* And from that Passage, *As we have seen, so have we heard*, they argue that there must be Images to look on; and because it is said, *God is marvellous in his Saints*, they conclude that the *Church* must be deck'd with Pictures: And from *No man lighteth a Candle and putteth it under a bushel*, they wisely infer that *Images* must be set upon the Altar; All which are as *remote* from their Sense as the *first* Verse of the *first* Chapter of *Genesis*. What *greater* Certainty have they with their *Infallibility* than we without it? We can know as well the Sense of *plain* Texts of *Scripture*, as of *plain* Texts of *Councils*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechisms*; and we can as easily pervert the Sense of the *one* as of the *other*: And as for those that are not *plain*, even *General Councils* you see for all their *Infallibility* may be mistaken about them as well as we. So that when all comes to all, by forsaking the *infallible* Authority of *Scripture* to rely upon the *infallible* Authority of *that Church*, we are so far from arriving at a *greater* Certainty of Faith that we are involved in *greater* Uncertainties than ever. But then,

4. And

4. And laſtly, in relying upon the Authority of *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than juſt what are *neceſſary* to render our Faith *vertuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome* (ſuppoſing it were as *ſure* a Ground of Faith as it is pretended) our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of Virtue in it. It is pretended (though falſly you ſee) that *that Church*'s Authority is ſo *ſure* a Ground of Faith, that while a Man depends upon it he cannot be miſtaken in any *neceſſary* Article of Faith; which in Reality amounts to no more than this, That while a Man believes as *that Church* believes, which infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation; and it is equally *true*, that while a Man believes as the *Scripture* teaches, which infallibly teaches all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, he infallibly believes all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation; that is, both are equally *falſe*. For no Man can infallibly believe either the *Church* or *Scripture*, becauſe *Infallibility* exceeds the Capacity of *humane* Nature; no Man can ſo believe *either* but that he may be miſtaken, and if he may be miſtaken, its *poſſible* he may not believe all that is *neceſſary* to Salvation, whether he grounds his Faith upon the *Church* or the *Scripture*. But becauſe this *Church* pretends ſo to ſecure my Faith while I depend upon her Authority as that I cannot be miſtaken, for this very Reaſon I cannot depend upon it, becauſe I am ſure of this, that *God* never deſigned for me any ſuch Means of Believing as ſhould render my Faith *infallible*. For to what End ſhould he require me to take ſo much Pains

and Care to ſecure my Faith from Errors, if he hath furniſhed me with any *certain* Means of being *infallible?* It would be but applying that Means whatever it is, and my Danger would be immediately over; and then I need trouble my Head no further, being now ſo *ſecured* as that I cannot be miſtaken; after which it would be very *impertinent* methinks for *God* to trouble me with thoſe *unneceſſary* Injunctions *of trying all Things, and holding faſt to that which is good; of ſearching the Scriptures, and trying the Spirits whether they be of God; and taking heed whilſt I ſtand leſt I fall.* What need a Man be at the Expence of all this Labour and Caution, whoſe Faith is already ſecured? Seeing therefore *God* requires theſe Things at our Hands, it is a *plain* Caſe that he never intended us any Method how to be *infallible* in believing; and therefore ſince the *Church of Rome's* Authority is pretended to be ſuch a Method, for that Reaſon it ought to be rejected. It's plain that *God* intended that our Faith ſhould be a Grace and a Virtue, and conſequently that it ſhould be an Act of our Wills as well as of our Underſtandings, which ſuppoſes the Evidence of it not to be *irreſiſtible*; for what Virtue is it to believe that the Sun ſhines when it glares full in our Eyes? Since therefore our Faith muſt be a *free* and *voluntary* Aſſent upon ſuch Motives as are *ſufficient* to ſatisfy an *honeſt* Mind, but not to compel either an *obſtinate* Infidel or *ſelf-deceived* Hypocrite; *God* did not think fit ſo to ſecure our Faith as to leave it *impoſſible* for us to err *damnably*; And, indeed if he had, it would have been no Virtue in us to believe *ſavingly*; for what Virtue is it for a Man to

do

do that which it is *impoſſible* for him not to do? It is *ſufficient* that we cannot err damnably in our Faith without ſome *damnable* Fault in our Wills; but if we either refuſe to enquire into this Revelation for what is *neceſſary* for us to believe, or will only enquire into it with a Mind that is byaſs'd with *wicked* and *ſinful* Prejudices, or will not ſubmit our Underſtandings to it upon the *cleareſt* Conviction, there is no doubt but we may be *ignorant*, and we may be deceived in Things of the *greateſt* Moment, and it is but *juſt* and *fit* that we ſhould: And if notwithſtanding theſe Faults we could not err, for God's ſake what Virtue would it be to be *Orthodox?* But if with *honeſt*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds we will diligently enquire into *divine* Revelation, we ſhall there find all the *Neceſſaries* to Salvation ſo clearly and plainly propoſed to us, that 'twill be *morally impoſſible* for us either to be *ignorant* of, or deceived about them. So that by relying on *Scripture* you ſee we are expoſed to no *other* Uncertainties than juſt what are *neceſſary* to render our Faith a Virtue; and *God* doth as much require that our Faith ſhould be *vertuous* as that it ſhould be *Orthodox*; that it ſhould be the Act of an *honeſt*, *humble*, *diligent*, and *teachable* Mind, as that it ſhould be extended to all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation. Now our Faith may be *Orthodox* without an *infallible* Certainty, but it cannot be *vertuous* and *rewardable* with it. To what purpoſe then do the *Romaniſts* talk of an *infallible* certainty in Believing? Is it *reaſonable* to expect more certainty than *God* ever intended to give? He hath given as much as is *neceſſary* for *honeſt* Minds and no more, and whether *Knaves*

and *Hypocrites* believe *right* or *wrong* is of no *great* Concernment. If therefore our Faith be *liable* to no *other* Uncertainty than juſt what is *neceſſary* to try our Honeſty, that is much *better* for us in Reſpect of the Virtue of our Faith than an *infallible* Certainty. Suppoſing therefore that the *Church of Rome* were as *infallible* as it pretends, it is certain that the *Scripture* is as *infallible* as that; but whether we relie upon *one* or *t'other* we are *fallible* ſtill. And could that *Church* render us as infallibly *certain* as it pretends, it would thereby preſerve indeed the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, but then at the ſame Time it would deſtroy the Virtue of it: For to believe *right* when we cannot believe *wrong* is *fatal* and *neceſſary*; but to believe *right* when through *our own* Default we may believe *wrong*, this is *virtuous* and *rewardable*.

By what hath been ſaid therefore, I think it is ſufficiently evident, that it is upon the *Scripture* we are to relie, and not upon the *Church*, eſpecially upon the *Roman Church*, for all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation; and therefore ſince we are obliged to believe theſe Things upon Pain of *Eternal* Damnation, it neceſſarily follows that they muſt be *plain* and *clear*, and *Scripture*; otherwiſe we could not be juſtly ſo obliged to believe them. And thus I have ſhewn at large, that the *Scripture* is the *great* Rule of our Faith and Manners, and that as ſuch, it is both *full* and *clear*, as containing in it all Things *neceſſary* to Salvation, and propoſing them ſo plainly and clearly, as that upon an *honeſt* and *diligent* Enquiry all Men may find and diſcover them.

A

Second Diſcourſe

Upon JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.

WHether theſe Words are to be rendred *Indicatively*; [*Ye do ſearch the Scriptures*] as ſome would have them, or *Imperatively*, [*Search the Scriptures*] as our Tranſlation renders them, amounts to the ſame thing; For if we render them *Indicatively*, [*Ye do ſearch the Scriptures*] it is evident, that they are ſpoken with Approbation, *Ye do read the Scriptures, and ye do very well in ſo doing:* For thus we find the *Bereans* commended for *Searching the Scriptures*, and *Timothy*, for *knowing them from a Child.* And if to Search the *Scripture* be a *commendable* Practice, then to be ſure our *Saviour* here mentions it at leaſt with Approbation; and what he approves when done, that to be ſure he would have us do. Whether therefore it be delivered in the Form of a Command, or of a *bare* Aſſertion, it is *equivalent* to a Command, it being at leaſt an Aſſertion of a Thing which he approves, and conſequently would have all Men to Practiſe. But becauſe there is a numerous Party in the *Chriſtian* World which doth not only forbid the People to Search the *Scriptures*; but repreſents it as a Practice of very *dangerous* Conſequence, it

s hereby become *neceſſary* that we ſhould not only aſſert, but prove their Obligation to it, which otherwiſe would be very *needleſs*, there being nothing more *plain* and *evident* in it ſelf. Now to prove that the People are obliged to Search and Read the *Scriptures*, I ſhall as briefly as I can, argue the Point from theſe following Topicks.

1. From the Obligations which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament*.
2. From our *Saviour*'s and his Apoſtles Approbation of their Practice in purſuance of this their Obligation.
3. From the *great* Deſign and Intention of Writing the *Scripturs*.
4. From the Direction of theſe *Holy Writings* to the People.
5. From the *great* Concernment of the People in the Matters contained in them.
6. From the *Univerſal* Senſe of the *Primitive Church* in this matter.

1. From the *general* Obligation which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search their *Scriptures*. For ſo *God* requires them to *keep the words which he commanded them, in their Hearts*, and *to teach them diligently to their Children*, and *to talk of them as they ſat in their Houſes, and as they walked in the way, and when they lay down, and when they roſe up, and to bind them as a ſign upon their hands*, Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. And elſewhere, This *book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein day and night*, ſpeaking

ſpeaking to the Children of *Iſrael* in general, *Joſ.* 1. 8. And again, *Ye ſhall lay up theſe my words in your heart and in your ſoul, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord ſware unto your Fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth*, Deut. 11. 18, 21. And to *meditate on God's Law day and night*, *David* makes a Part of the Character of the *Bleſſed* Man, *Pſal.* 1. 3. Now if they could not keep God's Laws in their Hearts, as moſt certainly they could not; if they could not teach them to their Children; if they could not talk of them upon all *juſt* and *proper* Occaſions, and in a word, if they could not meditate on them day and night without being very well acquainted with them by diligent Search and Reading them, it is moſt *certain* that to Read and Search into them was their *indiſpenſable* Duty. Now if there be the ſame Reaſon why *we* ſhould Read the *Scriptures* as there was why the *Jews* ſhould, then the Obligation of theſe Commands muſt extend to *us* as well as to *them*; becauſe the Reaſon of the Law is the Law; but 'tis evident, even beyond Contradiction, that there is no *good* Reaſon aſſignable for the *one*, which is not of *equal* force for the *other*; and whatſoever is objected by our Adverſaries in this Point againſt our Reading the *Scriptures*, is of *equal* validity againſt the *Jews* Reading them. It is Objected, That our Reading them, through our Incapacity to underſtand them, muſt occaſion a great many *Errors* and *Hereſies* in the *Church*. And why ſhould not their Reading them occaſion the ſame, ſince neither their Underſtandings were *larger* than ours, nor their Scriptures *clearer* and more *intelligible* than ours? It is farther

farther objected, that becauſe of the many *ill* Examples recorded in *Scripture* it is *dangerous* for the People to read it; becauſe of their Aptneſs to be miſled and corrupted by Example. But I beſeech you, are there not more *bad* Examples in the *Old Teſtament* than in the *New?* And were not the *Jews* as apt to be corrupted by them as we *Chriſtians?* And therefore ſince theſe Objections do preſs as much againſt their reading the *Scriptures* as ours, it is certain they ought to keep *both* from it or *neither*. Seeing therefore notwithſtanding theſe Objections *God* obliged the *Jews* to read them, it's plain they are not of Force enough to diſoblige us from doing the ſame.

2. From our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* Approbation of this Practice of the *Jews* in Purſuance of their Obligation to it, it is alſo evident that we are obliged to the ſame. That the *Common People* of the *Jews* did ordinarily read the *Scriptures* in our *Saviour*'s Time, is evident not only from the Text, *Search the Scriptures* (which if you take them *Indicatively*, are an *expreſs* Declaration that they did read them; and if you take them *Imperatively*, neceſſarily imply that they themſelves owned that they ought to read them) but alſo from thoſe Queſtions which our *Saviour* frequently ask'd them in his Conferences with them; ſuch as, *Have ye not read? Have ye never read in the Scripture?* And *hath not the Scripture ſaid ſo* and *ſo?* Which Queſtion would be very *impertinent* if reading the *Scripture* were not then ordinarily practiſed by that People. And that even their *holy* Women were then ſo well inſtructed in the *Scriptures* as to be able to inſtruct their Children,

dren, *Timothy* is a *ſignal* Inſtance, who, though his *Father* were an *Heathen*, had *known the holy Scriptures from a Child*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 10. which Knowledge he muſt neceſſarily have derived from his *Grand-Mother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*, whoſe Faith St. *Paul* celebrates; 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. And this Practice of reading the Scriptures which was ſo *common* among that People in our Saviour's time is ſo far from being diſcontinued either by *himſelf* or his *Apoſtles*, that it is always mentioned by them with Applauſe and Approbation. Thus the *Bereans* are commended as a People of a *nobler* Strain than thoſe of *Theſſalonica*, becauſe they *ſearched the Scriptures daily whether* thoſe Things which St. *Paul* had preached to them were ſo or no. And St. *Paul* is ſo far from reprehending *Timothy* for medling with the *Scriptures* whilſt he was a *Lay-man*, that he mentions it to his Honour, *that he had known the Scriptures from a Child.* And in all thoſe Paſſages wherein our *Saviour* takes it for granted that the *Common People* of the *Jews* did read the *Scripture*, we have not the *leaſt* Intimation of his diſlike of their Practice, which we ſhould certainly have had, had he apprehended it to be either *dangerous* or *unwarrantable.* Seeing therefore neither our *Saviour* nor his *Apoſtles* do in the *leaſt* diſallow of the *Scriptures* being read by the *Common People*, but on the contrary do expreſly commend it; this is a *plain* Argument that it was their Intention to perpetuate the Practice of it to *future* Ages. For ſeeing the *Jews* read the *Scriptures* in Obedience to an *expreſs* Command of *God*, as was ſhewn before, had our *Saviour* intended that they ſhould not continue it, he would doubtleſs have repealed

ed that Command by ſome Countermand, which he was ſo far from doing that he not only every where allows of their reading the *Scriptures*, but alſo expreſly approves and commends it; whereby he plainly eſtabliſhes the *Obligation* of that *ancient* Command in Obedience to which they did read them.

3. From the *great* Deſign and Intention of Writing the *Scriptures*, it is alſo evident, that the *People* are ſtill obliged to Read them. It is plain that the *great* Deſign of Writing the *Scripture* was to inſtruct Men in the Knowledge, and perſuade them to the Practice of *True Religion*; For thus of the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* St. *Paul* tells us, That *whatſoever things were written afore-time, were written for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. and *for our admonition*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. And as for the *New Teſtament*, we are told, That it was written, *that we might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name*, Joh. 20. 31. And St. *Peter* tells us, That he wrote both his Epiſtles to *ſtir up the pure minds of Chriſtians by way of remembrance, and to put them in mind of the words which were ſpoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour*, 2 Pet. 3. 1. And St. *John* gives us this account of his Writing his Epiſtles, *Theſe things have I written to you that ye ſin not*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. And St. *Jude*, this of his, *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, v. 3. Theſe are the Ends for which the *Scripture* was written;

written; but how can the Writing of it contribute to theſe Ends if we are not permitted to Read what is written? For the *Scripture* was written to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*, as I ſhall ſhew by and by; but to what purpoſe ſhould it be written to the *People* to inſtruct and admoniſh them, if the *People* are not allowed to Read its Inſtructions and Admonitions? What Influence could the Writing it have upon the People's Belief, that *Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, if they had been debarr'd from acquainting themſelves with what is written concerning him? How could it ſtir up their Remembrance, if they might not Read what it ſuggeſted to their Memory? By what *other* way can it keep the *People* from Sinning, but by Motives and Perſuaſions? But how ſhould its Motives and Perſuaſions affect their Minds if they are not allowed to conſult and underſtand them? Upon what Account can it move the *People* earneſtly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, if they are not allowed to learn from it either what that Faith is, or what thoſe Reaſons are which oblige them to contend for it? So that to write to the *People* on purpoſe to inſtruct and reform them, and at the ſame time to purpoſe to debar them from Reading it, is either to ſuppoſe, that the Writing will operate like a Charm, or to purpoſe a *downright* Contradiction. For how oddly would it have lookt, if in the *afore cited* Paſſages, the *Apoſtles* had expreſt themſelves thus: '*Theſe things are written for your Learning* '*and Admonition; but 'tis by no means fit you ſhould* '*learn from them what they teach and admoniſh you.* '*Theſe Things are written that ye ſhould believe that* '*Jeſus*

'*Jeſus is the Chriſt and the Son of God*; *but they are* '*not written that you ſhould enquire of them whether* '*Jeſus be the Chriſt or the Son of God. Theſe* '*Things are written to put you in Mind of what hath* '*been ſpoken by the Prophets and Apoſtles*; *but they* '*were not written that you might acquaint your ſelves* '*by them what the Prophets and Apoſtles ſpake.* '*Theſe Things are written that you ſhould not Sin*; '*but beware you do not read them leſt the bad Ex-* '*amples recorded in them occaſion you to Sin.* In ſhort, '*Theſe Things were written to excite you ear-* '*neſtly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the* '*Saints*; *but you are by no means allowed to enquire* '*into them leſt you ſhould miſunderſtand them, and* '*ſo inſtead of contending for the Faith you ſhould* '*contend for Hereſie and Falſe Doctrine.* Had the *Apoſtles* thus expreſs'd themſelves, I appeal to any *reaſonable* Man whether theſe Paſſages would not have ſtartled his Underſtanding, and tempted him to queſtion whether the Authors of them were *well* in their Wits; and yet this muſt have been their meaning, ſuppoſing that they meant that the *People* ſhould not read what they wrote.

4. From the Direction of theſe *Holy Writings* to the *People*, it is alſo evident, That the *People* are ſtill obliged to Read, or acquaint themſelves with them. For ſo we find the Law of *Moſes* was delivered by *God* to all the *People* as well as to *him* and *Aaron*; and (as was ſhewn before) they were all of them commanded to ſearch and enquire into it. And ſo alſo were the *Sermons* of the *Prophets*, which are uſually prefaced with an, *Hear O Iſrael*, *Hear O Houſe of Judah*, *Hear O Houſe of Jacob*, and *Hear all ye of Judah*. So alſo our *Bleſſed Saviour* Preach'd his *Sermons* and *Parables*,

Parables, not only to his *Apoſtles*, and *Seventy Diſciples*, but alſo to the *People*, and to the Multitudes. And ſo alſo his *Apoſtles* direct their Epiſtles, not only *to the Saints, to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus, to the Beloved*, which in the Language of *Scripture* includes every *Chriſtian*; but alſo *to all that are at Rome, to all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to all the Saints which are in Achaia, to all the Saints which are at Philippi, to the twelve Tribes which are ſcattered abroad, to the Strangers ſcattered through Pontus, Galatia*, &c. and *to them which have obtained like precious Faith with us*, that is, to all the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* diſperſed over the World. Seeing therefore the *Scriptures* were directed to all, as well *Laity* as *Clergy*, this not only gives a Right to *all* to Read them, but alſo lays an Obligation upon *all* to acquaint themſelves with them. For the very directing ſuch a Writing or Epiſtle to *ſuch* or *ſuch* Perſons, doth, in the Senſe of all the World, imply, that he who writes doth deſign and intend, that they to whom he directs it ſhould Read and Peruſe it; and therefore, ſince the *Scriptures* were written to *all*, that is a *plain* Intimation, that it was the Intention of the Writers that *all* ſhould Read them. And for us not to Read what *God* hath written, and directed to us, is by Implication of Fact, a *Prophane* Neglect and Contempt of his Mercy, and looks as if we either thought him ſuch an *Inſignificant* Being, or our ſelves ſo *little* concerned in any thing that he can ſay or write to us, as that it would not be worth our while to receive, and peruſe the Contents of thoſe *Sacred* Epiſtles, which by the Hands of his *Holy Penmen* he hath vouch-

vouchſafed to direct to us. Nor is it a *ſufficient* Excuſe for our Contempt, to ſay, that in Conſideration of *our own* Proneneſs to Err and Miſtake, we ought to content our ſelves with this, that our *Spiritual Guides* ſhould Read God's Writings for us, and deliver the Senſe and Contents of them to us: For to be ſure, had *God* intended that the *Prieſts* only ſhould read them, he would have directed them only to the *Prieſts*, and ordered them only to deliver the Senſe of them to the *People*; and therefore ſince he hath directed them to *both*, this neceſſarily implies that it was his Intention that *both* ſhould read them. For if *God* had not directed them to Men, neither *Prieſts* nor *People* were obliged to read them; and therefore ſeeing the *great* Reaſon why any Men ought to read them is, becauſe they are directed to Men, this Reaſon obliges all Men to read them; becauſe they are directed to all Men. For not to be highly concerned to know and underſtand what it is that *God* writes to us is an Argument that we have a very *mean* Regard both of his Majeſty, and his Mind, and Will. But to be ſure whoſoever is highly concerned to know what ſuch a Writing contains, will, if he can, be very *curious* to peruſe it with his *own* Eyes at leaſt, ſuppoſing that it is not *unlawful* for him ſo to do; becauſe there is nothing gives that Satisfaction to a Man's Mind as the Information of his *own* Senſe. So that for Men wilfully to neglect reading the *Scripture* which *God* hath ſo expreſly directed to them, and thereby not only licenſed but obliged them to read it, argues a very *prophane* Diſregard both of the Author of it, and of the Matter it contains; and

for

for any Man, or Society of Men to forbid the *People* to read what *God* hath written and directed to them, is not only to deprive them of a Right which *God* hath given them, but alſo to acquit them of a Duty which he hath laid upon them. For St. *Paul* in thoſe Epiſtles which he wrote to the *Chriſtian People* in *general* of *ſuch* and *ſuch Churches*, ſtill takes it for granted that they would read them; as being not only warranted, but obliged thereunto by his writing them; for ſo *Epheſ.* 3. 3, 4. ſpeaking of that *great* Myſtery of the calling the *Gentiles* which *God* had revealed to him, concerning which, ſaith he, *I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt.* So alſo 2 *Cor.* 1. 13. *We write no other things unto you, than what you read*, that is, than what you may at leaſt, and are obliged to read by vertue of our writing them to you. And as for his Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, which he wrote to that *whole Church*, he gives Charge that it ſhould *be read to all the holy Brethren*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 27. So alſo for that of the *Coloſſians*, *When this Epiſtle* is, or hath been, *read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.* Where you ſee he all along either ſuppoſes or requires that what he wrote to *all* ſhould be read by *all* and to *all*. If therefore this Authority of St. *Paul* be *ſufficient* to over-rule the Authority of any *pretended Succeſſor of* St. *Peter*, then it's certain that reading the *Scripture* is ſtill the Duty of *Lay-men* notwithſtanding any *Papal* Prohibition to the contrary.

5. From the *great* Concernment the *People* have in the Matters contained in *Scripture*, it is alſo evident that they are obliged, if they are able, to read it and acquaint themſelves with it: For as for the Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, they are ſuch as are of *everlaſting* Moment to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*. The Articles of Faith which the *Scripture* propoſes are as *neceſſary* to be believed by the *People* as by the *Clergy*. The Precepts of Life which the *Scripture* preſcribes are as *neceſſary* to be practiſed by the *People*, as by the *Clergy*. The Promiſes and Threats with which the *Scripture* inforces thoſe Precepts are as *neceſſary* to be conſidered by the *People* as by the *Clergy*: And ſeeing *both* are equally concerned in the *great* Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, what Reaſon can be aſſigned why *both* ſhould not be obliged to acquaint themſelves with them? I know 'tis pretended that it is the *proper* Office of the *Clergy* to ſtudy the *Scriptures* for the *People* as well as for *themſelves*, and that therefore the *People* are obliged to receive the Senſe of the *Scriptures* upon Truſt from their Teachers without making any farther Enquiry. But I beſeech you, are you ſure that your Teachers are *infallible*? That they are not ſo is moſt *certain*, it being *notorious* that moſt of the *prevailing Hereſies* of *Chriſtendom* were *firſt* ſet on broach by the *Teachers* of the *Church*, and it is impoſſible they ſhould be *infallible*, who have ſo often actually erred even in Matters of the *higheſt* Moment. Suppoſe then what is fairly *ſuppoſable*, that your Teachers ſhould miſlead you, and not only into *dangerous* but *damnable* Errors; are you ſure that they ſhall be damned for you,

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and that you ſhall eſcape? If ſo, then *Hereſy* in the *Laity* can never be *damnable* if they receive it upon Truſt from their *Teachers*; and conſequently their Souls are as *ſafe* under the Conduct of *falſe Teachers* as *true*; provided always that *right* or *wrong* they believe what is taught them. But if your ſelves muſt give an Account to *God* as well for your Faith as for your Manners, and are *liable* in your *own* Perſons to *eternal* Damnation (as moſt certainly you are) as well for *Hereſy* as *Immorality*, then it is the moſt *unreaſonable* Thing in the World that you ſhould in all Things be obliged to believe your *Teachers* upon Truſt; for at this Rate a Man may be eternally *damned*, meerly for believing what he is obliged to believe. If it be ſaid that the *People* are not bound to believe what their *particular Paſtor* teaches, but what the *Church* teaches them, and the *Church* cannot err though their *particular Paſtor* may; I would fain know how ſhall the *People* be otherwiſe informed what the *Church* teaches them than by the Expoſitions of their *particular Paſtors*, they being at leaſt as *incapable* of informing themſelves what the Doctrine of the *Church* is, as what the Doctrine of the *Scripture* is; and therefore if their *Paſtor* ſhould err damnably in expounding to them what the *Church* teaches, as it is ſuppoſable he may if he be not *infallible*, there is no Remedy but they muſt err damnably in believing whatſoever their *Paſtor* teaches. But we are farther told, that it is *ſufficient* for the *People* that they believe in the *groſs* that whatſoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, and that as for the *particulars* there is no Neceſſity that they ſhould be informed about them; becauſe he who be-

lieves that all that the *Church* teaches is *true*, implicitly believes all that is *neceſſary*, ſeeing the *Church* teaches all that is *neceſſary*. But the miſchief of it is that this *compendious* Way of Belief is utterly *inſignificant*, and doth no way comport with the Deſign and Intention of a *Chriſtian*'s Faith. For *God* doth not require our Faith meerly for its *own* ſake, but in order to a farther End, that it may purify our Hearts, and influence our Lives and Manners; that is, that the Matters which we believe might by being believed by us affect our Wills, and continually move and perſuade us to abſtain from *all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*; and if our Faith hath not this Effect upon us, St. *James* aſſures us that it is a *dead* Faith, and will profit us nothing. But how is it *poſſible* that our believing *ſuch* and *ſuch* Propoſitions ſhould move and perſuade us, if we do not know what thoſe Propoſitions are, and what is the *true* Senſe and Meaning of them? What Man can be perſuaded by ſuch Propoſals as he doth not underſtand, and of which he hath no Manner of *explicite* Knowledge? An *Heathen* that believes that whatſoever *God* teaches is *true* doth implicitly believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* came from *God* to reveal his Will to Mankind, becauſe it is certain that *God* teaches this; but what is he the *better* for this his *implicite* Belief? What Influence can it have upon his Heart and Manners, who perhaps never heard of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor of any *one* Propoſition which he revealed to the World? And ſo he who believes that whatſoever the *Church* teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that there ſhall be a *future Judgment*, a

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Reſurrection of the Dead, and *an everlaſting State of Happineſs or Miſery after Death*; becauſe all theſe Things the *Church* teaches; but if he never hear of them, or hath no *explicite* Knowledge and Belief of them, how is it *poſſible* they ſhould operate on his Will and Affections, or ever perſuade him to be the *better* Man or the *better Chriſtian?* And the ſame is to be ſaid of all the *other* Articles of *Chriſtianity*. So that either we muſt believe to no Purpoſe, and content our ſelves with an *inſignificant* Faith that will not at all avail us; or take up our Faith upon Truſt from *fallible* Teachers who may miſlead us into *damnable* Errors, and if they ſhould, we muſt be *liable* to anſwer for it in *our* Perſons, and at our own *eternal* Peril; or, which is the Truth of the Caſe, we muſt be allowed to enquire, and judge for our ſelves at leaſt in all Things *neceſſary* to our *eternal* Salvation. Seeing therefore there are many Things in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* it ſelf obliges me upon Pain of Damnation to believe; it hence neceſſarily follows, that ſo far forth as the *Scripture* obliges me to believe what it teaches, it obliges me to underſtand what it teaches, otherwiſe I muſt believe I know not what, which is impoſſible; and ſo far as the *Scripture* obliges me to underſtand what it teaches, it muſt oblige me to *ſearch*, *enquire*, and *judge* what it teaches; becauſe I cannot underſtand without enquiring and judging: But how can I enquire what the *Scripture* teaches if I cannot be admitted to read and conſult the *Scripture?* And ſo again, there are many Duties in *Scripture* which the *Scripture* it ſelf obliges me to practiſe upon pain of *eternal* Damnation; but how

can it oblige me to Practiſe what it doth not oblige me to Underſtand; or how can it oblige me to Underſtand what it doth not oblige me to enquire after? But how can I enquire what it is that the *Scripture* obliges me to Practiſe, when I am forbid all acceſs to it, and it is lockt up from me in an *unknown* Tongue? In ſhort therefore, ſeeing the Things contained in *Scripture* are of the *higheſt* Moment to the *People*, and it is as much as their Souls are worth not to Believe and Practiſe what it Teaches; and ſeeing they can neither Believe nor Practiſe what they do not underſtand; it is of *infinite* concern to them ſo far at *leaſt* to Read, Conſult, and Underſtand the *Scripture*, as they ſtand obliged to Believe and Practiſe its Doctrines and Precepts.

6. And laſtly, From the *Univerſal* Senſe of the *Primitive Church* in this matter, it is alſo evident, that the *People* are obliged to read or acquaint themſelves with the *Holy Scripture*. For the *Primitive Church* for above *ſix hundred* years were ſo far from debarring the *People* the Uſe of the *Scripture*, that it continually urged and preſs'd it upon them as a matter of *indiſpenſable* Obligation. For ſo *Origen* wiſhes, That *all would do as it is written*, viz. *Search the Scriptures*. So alſo *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Hearken ye that are afar off, hearken ye that be near; the Word of God is hid from no man: it is a Light common to all Men, and there is no Darkneſs in it.* So alſo St. *Auſtin* *, *Think it not ſufficient that ye hear the Scriptures in the Church, but do you alſo read the Scriptures your ſelves in your own Houſes, or get ſome other to read*

* In Orat. adhort. ad Gent.

read them to you. So also St. *Jerom* †, *The Lord hath spoken to us by his Gospel, not that a few, but all should understand.* And elsewhere, speaking of the Women that were at *Bethlehem* with *Paula*, *It was not lawful*, saith he, *for any one of all the Sisters to be ignorant of the Psalms, nor to past over any day without learning some part of the Scriptures.* And elsewhere *, *We are taught*, saith he, *That the Lay-People ought to have the Word of God not only sufficiently, but also with abundance, that so they may be able to teach and counsel others.* So also St. *Chrysostome* †, *Hear me O Laity, get ye the Bible the most wholsom remedy for the Soul; and if ye will no more, at least get the New Testament, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earnest Teachers.* And elsewhere, he affirms *, *That it is more necessary for the Lay-People to read the Scriptures than either for the Monks or Priests, or any others.* And to cite no more of the *infinite Authorities* of the *Fathers* to this purpose, St. *Basil* observes *, *The Scripture of God is like an Apothecary's Shop full of Medicines of sundry sorts, that so every Man may there choose a convenient Remedy for his Disease.* And that the *People*, as well as the *Priests* were then allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is evident from a *notorious* matter of Fact; for when the *Roman Emperors* endeavoured to force the *Christians* by Persecution and Torments to deliver up their *Bibles* to be burnt, that so by

† In Psal. 86.

* Ep. ad Colos. c. 3.

† Ep. ad Colos. Hom. 9.

* In Matth. Hom. 3.

* In Psal. 1.

extinguiſhing thoſe *Sacred* Records they might extinguiſh *Chriſtianity*, they examined not only the *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, but alſo the *People* of all Degrees and both Sexes; many of whom, as well Women as Men, owned that they had *Bibles*, but rather choſe to die than to deliver them *up*; and many *others*, who to avoid Death, delivered up their *Bibles*, and are therefore branded with the *ignominious* Name of *Traditors*, for which they were excluded the *Communion of the Church*, and could not be readmitted without a *long* and *ſevere* Penance. But it is impoſſible the *People* could have been *Traditors* if they had had no *Bibles* to deliver *up*; and therefore being ſo, is an *undeniable* Argument, that the *People* were then allowed the Uſe of the *Scripture* as well as the *Prieſts*. And by the way, it's very *ſtrange* that any Community of *Chriſtians* ſhould think, that a *proper* Way to extinguiſh *Hereſie*, which thoſe *Heathen Perſecutors* made uſe of to extinguiſh *Chriſtianity*. But that in thoſe *firſt* Ages the *People* were allowed the Uſe of the *Bible*, is a caſe ſo *plain*, that they who of *later* Ages have thought meet to repeal this Allowance, have never been able to produce ſo much as one *probable* colour of *Primitive* Authority to warrant their Practice. And though in *other* Points they not only claim but raviſh *Antiquity*, in deſpite of Modeſty as well as Truth; yet here they are ſo abandoned of all pretence to it, that they are not able to produce ſo much as *one* Paſſage of any *Primitive Father* that ſeems to diſcourage the *People* from Reading the *Scripture*, and much *leſs* that forbids them ſo to do: And 'tis notorious to all the World, That in the *Primitive Ages*, when

when the *Latin* was the *Vulgar* Language of the *Romans*, the *Bible* was tranſlated into that Language for the Uſe and Inſtruction of the *People*; but when through the many Incurſions of the *Barbarous* Nations into the *Roman* Empire this Language was worn out by degrees, and inſtead of being the *vulgar*, became an *unknown* Tongue to that *People*; the *Governours* of that *Church*, having to ſerve their own ſecular Ends, introduced into it ſundry *corrupt* Doctrines and Practices, which they feared the Light of the *Scripture* might detect to the *People*, they thought it moſt *adviſable* not to tranſlate it into the *New Vulgar*, but to let it remain lockt *up* from their Cognizance in the *Old Latin*, which by this Time very *few*, except the *Clergy*, underſtood. And when for ſome Time it had lain hid from them in an *unknown* Tongue, they proceeded at laſt wholly to forbid the Uſe of it to the Layty. So that about the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Ages, which all agree were over-caſt with *groſs* Darkneſs and Ignorance, the *Scriptures* were ſhut *up*, like the *Sybilline Oracles* in the *Capitol*, and none but the *Prieſts* were allowed to Read and Conſult them. And though upon the Commencement of the *Reformation*, the *Bible* was for ſome time ſet forth again in *ſundry vulgar* Languages among the *People*, yet did the *Guides* of that *Church* ſoon find it *neceſſary*, for Defence of their own *Unſcriptural* Doctrines and Practices, to remit it to its *old* Confinement. For *Firſt*, The *Council of Trent*, in the *Fourth* Rule of their *Index Expurgatorius*, forbids the *Layty* to read, or ſo much as to have the *Bible* in the *Vulgar* Language, though tranſlated by thoſe of their own *Church*, without

without a Licence in Writing from the *Bishop* of the Dioceſs, or the *Inquiſitor*; and this upon Pain of not receiving Abſolution of their Sins unleſs they delivered *up* thoſe their *Bibles* to their *Ordinary*. To which Rule, *Pope Clement the Eighth* afterwards added this Obſervation, *That hitherto by the Command and Practice of the Holy Roman and Univerſal Inquiſition, the Faculty of granting ſuch Licences for reading or keeping Bibles in the Vulgar Tongue, or any Summaries or Hiſtorical Compendiums of the ſaid Bibles, is taken away; which is to be inviolably obſerved.* And in the *Index of Prohibited Books*, publiſhed by *Pope Alexander the Seventh*, not only thoſe *Bibles* that are tranſlated and printed by *Hereticks*, but alſo all *Bibles* in any *Vulgar* Tongue are abſolutely forbidden. And though, where the *Reformation* hath prevailed, they are forced againſt their *own* Laws more freely to indulge the Uſe of the *Scripture* to their *People*, yet in thoſe Countries where they are *ſole* Maſters this Priviledge is very rarely granted.

And now being thus *neceſſitated* to deprive the *People* of the Light of the *Scripture*, leſt they ſhould thereby diſcover their Errors and Corruptions, it was *neceſſary* for them to invent ſome *plauſible* Pretences to juſtifie a Practice ſo contrary both to *Scripture* and *Primitive* Antiquity, and ſo enormouſly *derogatory* to the *common* Right of *Chriſtians*; and when it muſt be done, it is a very *hard* Caſe if Men of Wit and Learning cannot find ſomething to ſay for any thing. Now the *two main* Pretences that are urged in this Caſe are; *Firſt*, That a *general* Permiſſion of the Uſe of *Scripture* to the *People* muſt neceſſarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Hereſies*: *Secondly*,

Secondly, That it will prove an *unavoidable* occaſion of *great* Corruptions in Manners.

1. That a *general* Permiſſion of the Uſe of *Scripture* to the *People* muſt neceſſarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Hereſies*; becauſe there are many Things in *Scripture* which are *hard* to be underſtood, and which the *Unlearned*, who are *unqualified* to underſtand them *aright*, will be apt to wreſt into a *wrong* Senſe to their *own* Deſtruction. To which I anſwer,

1. That this Reaſon holds as *good* againſt the writing and publiſhing the *Scripture* at *firſt* in Languages that were vulgarly known to the *People*, as againſt the Tranſlating them now into the *vulgar* Languages. For the *Hebrew*, in which the *Old Teſtament* was written, was the *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and the *Greek* in which the *New Teſtament* was written, was then the moſt *vulgar* Language of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and yet notwithſtanding there were the ſame *hard* Things *then* in the *Scripture* as *now*, and the *People* were as *unlearned* then, and as apt to wreſt theſe *hard Scriptures* to their *own* Deſtruction *then* as *now*; yet *God* notwithſtanding thought fit to write and publiſh it in Languages that were moſt *known* to the People; and therefore, either we muſt ſay, that he did not take that Care that he ought to have done to prevent *Errors* and *Hereſies*, or that this is no *good* Reaſon why the *People* ſhould be debarred of the *Scripture* in their own *vulgar* Language. For why ſhould not the Writing the *Scriptures* at *firſt* in the *vulgar* Languages as much open a Door to *Hereſie*, as the tranſlating them afterwards, ſeeing it is neither their being written in the *Vulgar* Language, nor their being tranſlated into the *Vulgar* Lan-

Language, but their being in the *Vulgar* Language that is here pretended to ſet open this *dangerous* Door to *Hereſies*.

2. This Objection ſtrikes with *equal* force againſt God's writing and publiſhing the *Scripture* to the *People*, as againſt their reading and conſulting it. For that *God* wrote theſe *Scriptures* to the *People*, and that in ſo doing, he not only gave them a Right, but alſo laid on them an Obligation to Read them, I have already ſhewed. If therefore the Reading the *Scripture* by the *People* be ſuch an *unavoidable* Inlet of *Error* and *Hereſie*, as this Objection pretends, it was doubtleſs very unadviſedly done of *God* to publiſh ſuch a *dangerous* Book to the World; which thoſe for whom he publiſhed, and to whom he directed it cannot familiarly converſe with without *eminent* Peril of being infected with *Hereſie*. And if the *Scripture* be ſuch a *quarrelſome* Knife as theſe Men ſay it is, that the *People* can hardly touch it without cutting their Fingers, they are certainly more beholding to the *Church* for taking it from them, than they are to *God* for beſtowing it on them.

3. This Objection makes as much at leaſt againſt the *Prieſts* Reading the *Scripture* as the *People*. For moſt of thoſe *Hereſies* that have been broacht to the *People* were *firſt* brewed by the *Prieſts*, from whoſe Lips the *People* do commonly derive their *Errors*, as well as their *Knowledge*: Witneſs thoſe *famous Hereſies* with which the *Chriſtian* World hath been ſo diſtracted from *one* Generation to *another*, ſuch as the *Novatian*, the *Donatiſt*, the *Arian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Eutichian*, the *Eunomian*; all which Counterfeits, and a great

great many more, were *first* coined by the *Clergy*, and diſperſed for *current Chriſtianity* among the *Layty*. And therefore, if this Pretence, that the Reading of *Scripture* opens a Gap to *Hereſie*, be a *ſufficient* Reaſon why the *Layty* ſhould not Read it, it is a much more *ſufficient* Reaſon why the *Clergy* ſhould not Read it. For it requires Skill and Learning as well to wreſt the *Scripture* into ſuch *falſe* Senſes as are likely to impoſe upon the World, as to interpret it into its *true* Senſe; and I am very ſure that it ordinarily requires more Wit and Art, to extort from the *Scripture probable* Errors, than it doth to diſcover by it *neceſſary* Truth; and if ſo, then if the danger of letting in *Hereſies* is a *true* Reaſon why any ſhould not Read it, it is much more a *true* Reaſon why the *Learned* ſhould not Read it than the *Unlearned*; and conſequently why the *Prieſts* ſhould not Read it than the *People*, ſeeing the *former* are more qualified to extract *Hereſies* from it than the *later*. If therefore this Objection ſignifie any Thing, it muſt be this, That it is a very *dangerous* thing for any Body to Read the *Bible*; that this ſame *Divine* Book, which *God* thought fit to publiſh to the World, and which the *Primitive Church* thought fit to oblige all that were able to Peruſe and Study, is now become ſuch a *dangerous* Inlet of *Hereſie*, that like *Pandora's Box*, you can no ſooner open it, but Swarms of *Errors* and *Falſe Doctrines* will preſently fly abroad into the World; ſo that it would be very well for the World if it were either utterly extinguiſhed, or hid in ſome *inacceſſible* Repoſitory, where no *Mortal* Eye might ever approach it.

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4. This Objection expreſly contradicts our *Saviour*, and the *Primitive Fathers*. For *Matt.* 22. 29. our *Saviour* tells the *Sadducees*, who were cavelling with him about the Reſurrection; *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Had therefore the *Sadducees* been of the ſame Mind with our *Objectors* they would doubtleſs have told him, *by your good Leave Sir, in this Point you your ſelf are in an Error, for in all Probability had we known the Scripture or been intimately acquainted with it, we ſhould have err'd much more.* Either therefore our *Saviour* was miſtaken in charging the Errour of the *Sadducees* upon their Ignorance of *Scripture*, or our *Objectors* are miſtaken in making it ſo *neceſſary* an Expedient for the Prevention of Error to forbid the *People* being acquainted with *Scripture*; for 'tis plain *He* and *They* are of *quite Different* Opinions in the Caſe. But whatever their Opinion is, I am ſure the *Primitive Fathers* were of the ſame Opinion with our *Saviour*: For *Irenæus* writing of the *Valentinian Hereticks*, * *All thoſe Errors they fall into, becauſe they know not the Scriptures.* So St. *Jerom*, † *We muſt ſearch the Scriptures with all Diligence, that ſo as being good Exchangers we may know the lawful Coyn from the Copper.* And elſewhere, *That infinite Evils ariſe from Ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this Cauſe the greateſt Part of Hereſies have proceeded.* St. *Chryſoſtom* is of Opinion, *that if Men would be converſant with the Scriptures and attend to them, they would not only not fall into Errors themſelves, but be able to reſcue thoſe that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would inſtruct Men both in right Opinions, and good Life.* And to name

* Lib. 3. c. 12.

† In Ep. ad Epheſ. l. 3. c. 4.

name no more, *Theophilact* tells us, *that nothing can deceive them who ſearch the Holy Scriptures; for that ſaith he is the Candle whereby the Thief is diſcovered.* But it ſeems, according to *Modern* Experiments, this Candle of *Scripture* rather ſerves to light the Thief into the Houſe, than to diſcover him when he is there; and therefore it is thought *neceſſary* for *honeſt* Men's ſecurity either that it ſhould be wholly extinguiſhed, or at leaſt hinder'd from giving Light by being ſhut *up* in a *dark Lanthorn* of an *Unknown* Tongue. But when they who were once the *honeſt* Men are become the *Thieves*, it is no wonder that they ſhould thus change their Note, and complain of the Light of this Candle as *dangerous* to them, which *heretofore* they eſteemed their *greateſt* Security. I am ſure the Reaſon aſſigned by St. *Peter*, why ſome Men wreſted the *Scriptures* to their *own* Deſtruction, was not their reading the *Scripture*, but contrary wiſe their not reading it enough, *which they that are unlearned*, ſaith he, *wreſt to their own deſtruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. *Unlearned* in what? Why doubtleſs in the *Holy Scripture*. For as to *humane* Learning, St. *Peter* himſelf was as *unlearned* as they; and if it were their being *unlearned* in *Scripture* that occaſioned them to wreſt it into an *heretical* Senſe, then it is not Mens reading the *Scripture* that leads them into *Hereſy*, but their not reading it enough. To ſay therefore that the Peoples reading the *Scripture* is an Inlet of *Hereſy*, and to ſay, no it is not their reading it, but their not reading it enough is the Inlet of Hereſy, is an *expreſs* Contradiction; the *former* our *Objectors* ſay, the *latter* our *Saviour*, his *Apoſtles*, and the *Primitive Church* ſay; and I think it is no

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hard Matter to determine which of these *two* Contradictions we ought to believe.

5. And lastly, According to this Objection, the *best* Way to keep Men from being *Hereticks* is to deprive them of all Means of arriving at the Knowledge of the Truth: And this, I confess, is a very *certain* Way, though not a very *Honest* one. Let Men know nothing of *Religion*, and to be sure they cannot be *Hereticks*, it being *impossible* for Men to err in their Conceptions of those Things whereof they have no Notion. Put out a Man's Eyes, and you certainly prevent his being imposed upon by *false* Medium's of Sight to mistake *one* Colour or Figure for *another*; And yet I fancy most Men would think this a *cruel* Kind of Courtesy. But if Men must not be allowed *Scripture* to instruct them in the Truth, for this Reason; because it may occasionally mislead them into *Errors* and *Heresies*, then they must be allowed no Means of Instruction that may occasion them to err, and consequently no Means at all, there being no *imaginable* Means of Instruction which may not be an Occasion of *Errors* and *Heresies*. Is the *Scripture* it self in its *own* Nature an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*, or not? If you say it is, consider before you say it, how it could consist with the Truth and Veracity of *God* to publish such a Book to the World as tends in its *own* Nature to seduce and mislead the Understandings of those that read it. If you say it is not *so* in it self, but only that it may be so accidentally, I would fain know what Means of Instruction is there which may not accidentally become an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*; and therefore if this

this be a *ſufficient* Reaſon to deprive Men of *Scripture*, it is *ſufficient* to deprive them of all *other* Means of Inſtruction. And ſeeing the Knowledge of *Religion* is the Food of Mens Souls, to keep them in Ignorance for fear they ſhould err, is to deny them Food for fear they ſhould ſurfeit. There is no doubt but Men whoſe Minds are tinctured with *Heretical* Pravity will be apt enough to extract the Poiſon of *Error* out of the *cleareſt* Conveyances and Diſcoveries of Truth; but what then? Do not *bad* Men ordinarily apply the *beſt* Things to the *worſt* Purpoſes? If Men fall into *Hereſy* by reading the *Scripture*, where lies the Fault? not in the *Scripture* ſure, no *Chriſtian* will pretend that; and if it be in themſelves, in their *Pride*, or *Vain-glory*, or *Covetouſneſs*, or *Senſuality*, (as it is demonſtrable it is) is it *juſt* that *All* ſhould be deprived of it, becauſe *ſome ill* Men have made an *ill* Uſe of it? Some Men have ſurfeited by Eating and Drinking, is it *juſt* that all Mankind therefore ſhould be deprived of Meat and Drink? Suppoſe a Prince, pretending to be an *infallible Geographer*, ſhould iſſue out a Proclamation commanding all his Subjects to travel at *Mid-night*, and ſhould aſſign *this* as the Reaſon of it, that he had been certainly informed that *ſeveral* of them had loſt their Way at *Noon*, and wandred into Bogs and Precipices by the Light of the Sun; would any *one* imagin *this* to be the *true* Reaſon, or rather would not every *one* believe that his *true* Deſign was to keep his People in Ignorance of the Roads and Situation of his Country, that ſo they might never be able to diſcover the Errors of his Maps, which would perhaps diſcover him to be not only a *fallible Ge-*

ographer, but alſo a very *erroneous* one? And where the *People* are forbid travelling in the Light of the *Scripture*, whatever may be pretended, *wiſe* Men will believe that the *true* Reaſon is not to prevent the Peoples falling into *Errors*, but to prevent the diſcovering the *Errors* of thoſe to whoſe Guidance and Direction they are wholly and ſolely ſubjected. And this I conceive is a *ſufficient* Anſwer to the *firſt* Objection, *viz.* That the Allowance of the *Scripture* to the *People* is a *dangerous* Inlet of *Error* and *Hereſy*. I proceed therefore to the Second, which is this;

Object 2. That there are *many* Things recorded in *Scripture* which are very *apt* to ſuggeſt *lewd* Thoughts to the People, and thereby to corrupt their Manners, as particularly the many *bad* Examples therein related, which are of a very *contagious* Nature, and conſequently *dangerous* for the *People* to converſe with. In Anſwer to which I deſire theſe *four* Things may be ſeriouſly conſidered.

1. That this *Objection* ſtrikes as much againſt the *Scripture* it ſelf as againſt the People's reading it. For what *worſe* Thing can be ſaid of the *Scripture* than this, that it is ſuch an *infectious* Book, ſo *apt* to excite *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds, and to Kindle *lewd* Affections in their Hearts, that it is by no Means fit the *People* ſhould read it? Should this be ſaid to a *Turk*, or a *Heathen*, who had never read *one* Word in the *Bible*, he would certainly conclude it to be nothing but a *Canto of Ribbaldries* written for no *other* End but to provoke and entertain the *laſci-*

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vious Inclinations of Mankind. And certainly had our *Objectors* but as much Reverence for this *Holy Book* as they pretend, they would rather oblige their *People* to read it than withhold it from them, upon a Pretence that doth ſo ſcandalouſly reflect upon its Reputation. If there be any ſuch Paſſages in *Scripture* as are *apt* to ſtart *lewd* Thoughts in Mens Minds, the utmoſt that can be fairly pretended, is, That thoſe Paſſages ought to have been left out of the Peoples *Bibles*, or at leaſt to have been left *untranſlated*: But to urge *this* as a Reaſon, why all the reſt of the *Scripture* ſhould be denied to the *People*, inſinuates, as if the *whole* were nothing elſe but a *meer* Kennel of *contagious* Obſcenities. For to urge that for a Reaſon, why the *Scripture* in *general* ſhould not be read by, or to the *People*, (which at moſt is only a Reaſon why ſome *few* Paſſages of it ſhould not be read by them) is to ſuppoſe the whole *Scripture* to be made *up* of ſuch Paſſages as are *apt* to infuſe *vicious* Thoughts into the *People*; than which what can there be ſuppoſed more *falſe* in it ſelf, or more *derogatory* to the *Scripture*?

2. This *Objection*, if it proves any Thing, doth as well prove that it was *unfit* for *God* to publiſh the *Scripture* to the *People*, as it is for the *People* to read it. For is it fit, that *He, who is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, ſhould publiſh ſuch Things to the World as are *apt* to engender *impure* Thoughts in Mens Minds? And yet though Mens Minds were as *apt* to imbibe *impure* Thoughts when theſe Things were *firſt* publiſhed, as they are now; this hindred not *God* from publiſhing them to the World in ſuch

Languages as are beſt *known* and *underſtood* by the *People*. Either therefore *God* did not ſo well know what is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds as our *wiſe* Objectors; or He was *leſs* concerned than they to preſerve them from being corrupted; or what they object is both *falſe* and *ſcandalous*. For to ſay, That the *wiſe* and *holy God* hath publiſhed ſuch Things to the World as his Miniſters find *neceſſary* to conceal from the World, leſt its Thoughts ſhould be corrupted by them, is in effect to ſay, that his Miniſters are grown *wiſer* than he, or are more concerned for the Intereſt of Holineſs than he. If the *Vicious* Examples, for inſtance, that are recorded in *Scripture* are more *apt* to deprave Men than to inſtruct them, what need they have been recorded? What is there in the *meer* Story of *Noah*'s Drunkenneſs and Inceſt, and *David*'s Adultery, conſidered abſtractly from the *good* Inſtructions it gives, that ſhould move *God* to deliver it down to all *future* Poſterity? If it ſerve no *good* Ends, it is recorded to a *bad* purpoſe; and therefore, if for this Reaſon, becauſe it is *apt* to corrupt Mens Minds, the *Church* be obliged to conceal it now, for the very ſame Reaſon *God* was obliged to have concealed it *for ever*. Either therefore we muſt ſay that *God* did very *ill* in publiſhing it, or that the *Church* doth very *ill* in ſuppreſſing it; for *God* could have no *other* End in publiſhing it to the World, but only to inſtruct the World by it. If therefore it be not *inſtructive*, *God* was miſtaken; but if it be, it is *fit* the World ſhould be acquainted with it.

3. That this *Objection* doth expreſly contradict the *Scripture* it ſelf; For whereas it tells us, that the

the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* would be apt to deprave the Peoples Minds and Manners, St. *Paul* tells us the quite contrary: *These Things were our Examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they*, i. e. the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, *luſted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were ſome of them: Neither let us commit fornication as ſome of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thouſand: Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents; Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer: Now all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Whereas this *Objection* urges that there are *ſundry* Paſſages in *Scripture* which ſhould the *People* read, would excite *evil* Thoughts in their Minds; The ſame St. *Paul* tells us, *That all Scripture is profitable*, not only *for Doctrine* and *Reproof*, but alſo *for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Whereas this *Objection* pretends, that it would be very *unſafe* for *young People* eſpecially, to be allowed the *Scripture*, becauſe there are ſeveral *amorous* Stories and Paſſages in it which will be apt to ſuggeſt *wanton* Thoughts to their *gay* and *amorous* Fancies. *David*, it is plain, was of a quite *contrary* Mind; for *wherewith* ſaith he, *ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word*, Pſal. 119. 9. than which two Paſſages what Aſſertions can be more contrary *one* to *another?*

4. And laſtly, That ſuppoſing this *Objection* to be thus far *true*, that there are ſome Paſſages in *Scripture* which may ſometimes occaſionally

excite *bad* Thoughts in Mens Minds, yet this is no *juſt* Reaſon why the Uſe of *Scripture* ſhould be forbid to the *People*. For every Thing which the *People* occaſionally make *bad* Uſes of, is for that Reaſon to be forbid to them; even *Prayer* and the *Sacraments*, and the *Profeſſion* of *Chriſtianity* ought to be forbidden them as well as the *Scripture*, ſeeing of the *one* as well as of the *other*, many *People* do occaſionally make very *bad* Uſes. So long as the *Scripture* is *good* in it ſelf, and *apt* in its *own* Nature to inſtruct and edifie thoſe that read it, this is *ſufficient* not only to warrant the Peoples Uſe of it, but to enjoyn and require it; and if it ſometimes occaſion *corrupt* Thoughts in *corrupt* Minds, this is no more a Reaſon why the *People* ſhould be deprived of the Light of it than ſome *bad* Mens making ill Uſe of the Light of the Sun is, why the Sun ſhould be extinguiſhed, or why the *People* ſhould be *for ever* ſhut *up* from the Light of it in *dark* and *diſmal* Dungeons. But as for thoſe very Paſſages of *Scripture*, which do ſometimes occaſion *ill* Thoughts in Mens Minds, they are ſo far from doing it of their *own* Natures, that as they are delivered in *Scripture*, there is nothing more naturally *apt* to repreſs *bad* Thoughts, and to arm and fortifie Mens Minds againſt them. As for inſtance, The *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* are generally delivered with *infamous* Characters, *ſevere* Prohibitions, and *dreadful* Inſtances of God's Vengeance attending them, which render them much more *apt* to repreſs than to excite *evil* Thoughts in Mens Minds; to quicken them to *Prayer* and *Watchfulneſs* againſt Temptations, and when at any Time they have been overcome by them, to

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encourage them to Repentance; or when they have overcome them, to ſtir them *up* to a *grateful* Acknowledgment of that *preventing* and *aſſiſting* Grace of God, by which they have been enabled to reſiſt and repel them. Theſe are the *natural* Uſes of thoſe *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture*; and therefore, if inſtead of making theſe Uſes of them, ſome Men pervert them to *bad* Purpoſes, that is *their* Faults and not the *Scriptures*. It is *ſufficient* that the *bad* Examples in *Scripture*, as they are there recorded, are in themſelves of *excellent* Uſe to the *People*; but ſhould Men be deprived of the Uſe of every *good* Thing they abuſe, I would fain know what one *good* Thing would be left free to their Enjoyment. And now having proved at large the Peoples Right and Obligation to Uſe and Search the *Holy Scripture*, and anſwered the *main Objections* againſt it; I ſhall conclude with theſe two Inferences from the whole.

1. If the *People* are obliged to acquaint themſelves with *Scripture*, then they are obliged to receive upon the Authority of *Scripture* thoſe *Divine* Truths which it propoſes to their Belief. For to what *other* end ſhould we be obliged to read and conſult the *Word of God*, but only that we may learn from it what is his Mind and Will? but how ſhould we learn from *Scripture* what God's Mind is, if we are not to believe what he therein declares upon *Scripture* Authority? If I muſt not believe when I read the *Scripture* that this is God's Mind, becauſe the *Scripture* ſays ſo, it is *impoſſible* I ſhould ever learn God's Mind by reading it; and conſequently I am obliged to

read it to *no* Purpoſe: For there is nothing can teach me what God's Mind is, but that which gives me *ſufficient* Ground to believe that what it teaches is the Mind of *God*. When therefore I read the *Scripture*, and find ſuch a Propoſition plainly aſſerted in it, is this a *ſufficient* Ground or no for me to believe it to be the Mind of *God?* If it be, then the Authority of *Scripture* is a *ſufficient* Ground for my Belief; If it be not, then the *Scripture* cannot teach me what God's Mind is; becauſe it cannot give me *ſufficient* Ground to believe any *one* Propoſition in it to be the Mind of *God*. We are told indeed, that we are not to receive the Senſe of the *Scripture* from the *Scripture*, but from the *Church*, who alone hath Authority to Expound it to us, and whoſe Expoſitions in all Matters of Faith are *infallible*. But if this be ſo, to what End ſhould we read the *Scripture*, ſeeing the only End of Reading is to learn the Senſe of what we read, which according to this Principle is not to be learnt from *Scripture?* So that though there be no other *wiſe* End of reading the *Scripture*, but only to learn from it what it means, yet it ſeems for Men to read it for this End is a *perfect* Labour in Vain; ſeeing it is not from the *Scripture* but from the *Church* that they are to learn the Meaning of *Scripture*. For as for the *Scripture*, if theſe Men are to be believed, it is nothing but a heap of *unſenſed Characters*; ſo they expreſly term it: But what do they mean by it? Is it that the *Scripture* conſiſts of a company of Letters, and Syllables, and Words, that carry with them no *determinate* Senſe, that *God Almighty* hath written and publiſhed a Book to the World that means no-

nothing? If ſo, then when the *Church* by its *infallible* Authority pretends to expound the *Scripture*, Her meaning is not to expound the Senſe of it, but to impoſe a Senſe on it which was never in it; for how can She expound the Senſe of a Book which hath no Senſe in it? If the *Church* is to expound the Senſe of *Scripture*, the *Scripture* muſt have a *certain determinate* Senſe in it before ſhe expounds it; for to expound the Senſe of *That* which hath no Senſe, is Nonſenſe: And if the *Scripture* hath a *certain* Senſe in it antecedently to the *Church*'s Expoſition of it, why do they call it a Parcel of *Unſenſed Characters?* If their Meaning be only this, that the Senſe of *Scripture* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, is ſo *obſcure* and *ambiguous*, that without the *infallible* Expoſition of the *Church*, we can never be *certain* what it is; beſides, that this is notoriouſly *falſe*, the *Scripture* in all *neceſſary* Points both of Faith and Manners, being ſo very *plain* and *clear*, that any Man that reads it with an *unprejudiced* Mind, may be as *certain* of the Senſe of it, as he can be of the Senſe of any Writing, and conſequently of the Senſe of any *written* Expoſition of the *Church*; beſides this, I ſay, it is *evident*, that whatever theſe Men pretend, it is not meerly becauſe of the obſcurity of *Scripture* that they oblige Men to ground their Faith upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*. For they own as well as we, that in many Things the *Scripture* is very *plain* and *clear*, and yet they will by no Means allow Men to ground their Belief of theſe things upon the Authority of *Scripture*, but all muſt be reſolved into the Authority of the *Church*. By which it is evident, That if all the *Scripture* were as

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plain as the *plaineſt* Scriptures, they would ſtill contend for the Neceſſity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*; and conſequently that the *true* Reaſon why they contend for it, is not becauſe the *Scripture* is *obſcure*, but becauſe they are reſolved to advance their *Church*'s Authority. We own as well as they, that where the *Scripture* is *obſcure*; Men ought to be guided by the Authority of the *Church*, which we freely allow to be the *beſt* Expoſitor of *Scripture*. But the *true* State of the Difference between *them* and *us*, is this, That whereas we require *plain* Men to judge of *plain* Things with their *own* Underſtandings, and all Men, ſo far forth as they are *capable*, to judge for themſelves in Matters of *Religion*, and not content themſelves to ſee with the *Church*'s Eyes, where they are able to ſee with their *own*; nothing will ſatisfie theſe Men, but to have all Men, as well *Wiſe* as *Simple*, ſurrender *up* their Faith and Judgment to the *Church*, and wink *hard*, and believe what-ever the *Church* believes, purely becauſe the *Church* believes it. Whatever they pretend therefore, the Truth of the Caſe is this; They will by no means allow us to believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*; not becauſe the *Scripture* is *obſcure*, (though this they pretend, for were it never ſo *plain* the Caſe would be the ſame) but becauſe they are *ſenſible* that this will inevitably ſubvert their *uſurped* Dominion over the Faith and Conſciences of Men. But we muſt believe upon the Authority of the *Church*; and who is this *Church* I beſeech you? Why they themſelves are this *Church*. So that whereas *God* hath publiſhed a Book called the *Bible*, on purpoſe to declare his

his Mind and Will to the World, here are ſtarted *up* a Sort of Men that call themſelves the *Church*, who very gravely tell us; *Sirs, You muſt not ſo much as look into this Book, or if you do, muſt not believe any one Word in it upon its own Credit and Authority. For though we do confeſs it is the Word of God, yet we are the ſole Judges of the Senſe of it; and therefore whatſoever we declare is its Senſe, how unlikely ſoever it may ſeem to you, you are bound in Conſcience to receive and believe it for this very Reaſon, becauſe we declare it. In ſhort, you muſt reſign up your Eyes, your Faith, your Reaſon, and Underſtandings to us, and ſee only with our Eyes, and believe only with our Faith, and judge only with our Judgment; and whitherſoever we ſhall think fit to lead you, you muſt tamely follow us without preſuming to examin whether we lead you right or wrong.* But yet after all to induce us thus to inſlave our Underſtandings to them they themſelves are fain to appeal to *Scripture*, and allow us in ſome Things to judge of the Senſe of it, and to believe thoſe Things upon its Authority. For no *wiſe* and *honeſt* Man will ever believe either that They are the *Church*, or the *infallible* Judges of the Senſe of *Scripture* without ſome Proof and Evidence; and for this they are fain to produce ſeveral Texts of *Scripture*, ſuch as, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church.* Now ſuppoſing that to be *true*, which is notoriouſly *falſe*, *viz.* that thoſe Texts do neceſſarily imply that They are the only *true Catholick Church*, and that as ſuch they are conſtituted by God *infallible* Judges of *Scripture*; yet before I can believe ſo, I muſt judge for my ſelf whether this be the Senſe of them or no; and if I judge it is, I muſt be-

believe that they are the *Church*, and *infallible* upon the *Scripture*'s Authority and not theirs; for their Authority is the Thing in debate, and I cannot believe upon it before I believe it. So then, though we muſt believe nothing elſe upon *Scripture* Authority, yet upon this very Authority we muſt believe that they are the *Church*, and that they are *infallible*, which are the *fundamental* Principles of their *Religion*; that is to ſay, we muſt believe as much upon *Scripture* Authority as will ſerve their turn, and no more. But may I be *certain* of the Truth of theſe *two Fundamental* Principles upon *Scripture* Authority, or no? If I may, why may I not as well be infallibly *certain* upon the ſame Authority of *other* Principles of *Chriſtianity* as well as thoſe, ſeeing there are no *common* Principles of *Chriſtian Religion* but what are at leaſt as plainly revealed in *Scripture* as theſe. But this will ſpoil all; for if Men may be infallibly certain of the Principles of *Religion* upon *Scripture* Authority, what will become of the Neceſſity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, which is founded upon this Principle that Men can arrive at no *infallible* Certainty in *Religion* by relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, or indeed any *other* Authority but the *Church*'s? But if I cannot be infallibly *certain* of thoſe *two* Principles, *viz.* that they are the *Church*, and *Infallible*, by thoſe Authorities of *Scripture* which they urge to prove them, how can I be infallibly *certain* of any Thing that they declare and define? For if I am not *certain* that they are the *Church*, for all I know the *Church* may be *infallible*, and yet they may be miſtaken; and if I am not *certain* that they are *infallible*, for all

all I know they may be the *Church*, and yet ſtill be miſtaken. In ſhort, no Authority can render me infallibly *certain*, but that which is *infallible*; no *Infallibility* can render me infallibly *certain*, but that of which I have an *infallible* Certainty. Either therefore the *Scripture* can render me infallibly *certain* of the *Infallibility* of their *Church* (and if it cannot, I am ſure nothing can) or it cannot; if it can, why may it not as well render me infallibly *certain* of *other* Principles of *Chriſtianity* which are at leaſt as plainly revealed in it as that? If it cannot, how can I be infallibly *certain* that any Thing ſhe defines and declares to me is true? If then the Authority of *Scripture* can give us an *infallible* Certainty, we have as *juſt* a Pretence to it as They, it being upon this Authority that we ground our Faith; if it cannot, neither they nor we can juſtly pretend to it; becauſe they can no otherwiſe be infallibly *certain* of their *own Infallibility* but by *Scripture*. But the Truth of it is, *God* never intended either that *they* or *we* ſhould be infallibly *certain* in the Matters of our *Religion*; for after all the Means of Certainty that he hath given us he ſtill ſuppoſes that we may err, and plainly tells us that there muſt be *Hereſies*, and that even from among the Members of the *true Church*, where *infallible* Certainty is (if it be any where) there ſhould ariſe *falſe Teachers* who ſhould bring in *damnable* Doctrines; which could never have happened if he had left any ſuch Means to his *Church* as ſhould render her Children infallibly *certain*. All that he deſigned was to leave us ſuch *ſufficient* Means of Certainty in *Religion*, as that we might not err either dangerouſly or damnably without

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our own Fault. He hath left us his Word, and in that hath plainly diſcovered to us all that is *neceſſary* for us to believe in order to *eternal* Life. He hath left us a *ſtanding* Miniſtry in his *Church* to explain his *Word* to us, and to guide us in the Paths of Righteouſneſs and Truth; but ſtill he requires us to ſearch the *one*, and attend to the *other* with *honeſt*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds; and if we do not, we may err not only dangerouſly but damnably, and it is but *fit* and *juſt* we ſhould. But if we diligently ſearch the *Scripture*, and faithfully rely upon its Authority, without doing of which we ſearch it in vain; if we ſincerely attend to the *publick* Miniſtry, with Minds prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it; though we may poſſibly err in Matters of *leſs* Moment, yet as to all Things *neceſſary* to our *eternal* Salvation our Faith ſhall be inviolably ſecured; and this is as much as any *honeſt* Man needs, or as any *honeſt Church* can promiſe.

2. From hence alſo I infer that in the Matters of our Faith and *Religion*, *God* doth expect that we ſhould make uſe of *our own* Reaſon and Judgment. For to what End ſhould he put us upon ſearching the *Scriptures*, but that thereby we may inform our ſelves what thoſe Things are which he hath required us to believe and practiſe? But if it were his Mind that we ſhould wholly rely upon the Authority of our *Church*, or of our *Spiritual Guids*, and ſubmit our Faith to their Dictates without any Examination, what a *needleſs* and *impertinent* Imployment would this be for us, to ſearch and conſult the *Scriptures*? Conſult them, for what, if we are not to follow their Guidance and Direction, and to take the Meaſures of our Faith

Faith and Manners from them? And if for this End *God* hath obliged us to conſult them (as to be ſure it can be for no *other* End) then he hath obliged us to imploy *our own* Reaſon and Judgment, to conſider what they ſay, and enquire what they mean; otherwiſe he hath obliged us to conſult them to no Purpoſe. It is as evident therefore that *God* will have us uſe *our own* Reaſon and Judgment in diſcerning what we are to believe, and what not, in *Religion*, and not *lazily* rely upon *others* to *ſee*, and *diſcern*, and *believe* for us, as it is that he would have us ſearch and conſult the *Scriptures*; and that I think is evident enough, from what hath been ſaid, to any one that is not reſolved to admit of a Conviction. And indeed ſeeing our Reaſon is the *nobleſt* Faculty we have, it would be very ſtrange if *God* ſhould not allow it to intermeddle in the *higheſt* and moſt *important* Affair wherein he hath engaged us; and ſeeing it is our Reaſon only that renders us *capable* of *Religion*, what an *odd* Thing would it be for *God* to forbid us making uſe of our Reaſon in the moſt *important* Concerns of *Religion*, that is, in diſtinguiſhing what is *true Religion* from what is *falſe*, and what we ought to believe from what we ought to reject? I know it is pretended by thoſe who urge the *abſolute* Neceſſity of ſubmitting our Reaſon to the *Church*, that they allow Men to make Uſe of their *own* Reaſon and Judgment in diſcovering which the *true Church* is, and that all they contend for is only this, that when once Men have found the *true Church* they ought to enquire no farther, but immediately to deliver up their Reaſon and Underſtanding to it, and believe every Thing it believes without any farther Examination.

amination. So that before Men come into their *Church*, it ſeems they are allowed to ſee for themſelves, but after they are *in*, they muſt wink and follow their Guides, and depute them to ſee and underſtand for them; which to ſuch Men as are not quite *ſick* of their *own* Reaſon and Underſtandings ſhould methinks be a *great* Temptation to keep them out of their *Church for ever:* For if I may judge for my ſelf while I am *out* of it, but muſt not while I am *in* it, I muſt be very *fond* of parting with my *own* Eyes and Reaſon if ever I come into it at all. But ſuppoſe I was always *in* it, and had been bred *up* in its Communion from my Infancy, will they allow me when I come to the *full* uſe of my Reaſon fairly to queſtion whether theirs be the only *true Church* or no, and to hear the Reaſons, and examine the *Scriptures*, and conſult the Doctors on both ſides? No, by no means; this I am forbid under the Penalty of being deprived of the Benefit of *Prieſtly Abſolution.* So that in ſhort they will allow me to make Uſe of my Reaſon if I have been bred an *Heretick* in order to my Reconciliation to their *Church*, but if I have never been an *Heretick* I muſt never uſe my Reaſon to examine the Truth either of my *Church* or *Religion*; that is to ſay, I may uſe my Reaſon when there is no *other* Remedy, and I muſt continue a *Heretick* if I do not: But it were much better that I had never had Occaſion to uſe my Reaſon at all. So that according to theſe Men the Uſe of our Reaſon in *Religion* is only the *leaſt* of *two* Evils; it is not ſo *bad* as to continue a *Heretick*, but if I had never been one it would be very *bad*, and a *certain* Way to make me one; which methinks looks very *odd*, that the Uſe of

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my Reaſon ſhould be *neceſſary* to reduce me from *Hereſy*, and the Diſuſe of it as *neceſſary*, when I am reduced, to preſerve me from relapſing into *Hereſy*. 'Tis a *memorable* Paſſage of the *Biſhop of* St. *Mark* in the *Council of Trent*, *that Seculars are obliged humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given them by the Church, without diſputing or thinking farther of it.* Where by *the Church* he means the *Clergy* aſſembled in that *Council*. So that according to this Man's Doctrine the Faith of the *People* is a *meer* Beaſt of Burthen, that *right* or *wrong* muſt bear all the Load that the *Prieſts* ſhall agree to lay upon it; and though it ſhould feel itſelf *oppreſſed* by them with never ſuch *groſs* Contradictions or Abſurdities, it muſt think no farther of it, but tamely trudg on without ſtarting or bogling. At this Rate what Tricks may not the *Prieſts* play with the Faith of the *People?* Let them invent what Doctrins they pleaſe to ſerve the Intereſt of their *own* Ambition and Covetouſneſs, the *People* muſt believe them without asking *why*; or if they ſhould ask why, they muſt expect no *other* Anſwer but this, becauſe we have thought to define and declare them. For it is by no means *allowable* that the *People* ſhould exerciſe any *private* Judgment of their *own*, about Matters of Faith; no, I confeſs it is not, where the Matters propoſed to their Faith are *falſe* and *erroneus*; becauſe it is a *thouſand* to one but *one* time or *other* the *People* will diſcover the Frauds and Impoſtures of the *Prieſts*, and this would ſpoil all. But if the Matters of Faith are *true*, in all Probability the farther the *People* enquire into them the better they will be ſatisfied about them; and if in the Exerciſe of their *private*

Judgments they ſhould in ſome *particulars* err, that is far more *tollerable* than that they ſhould be utterly deprived of the Means of being able to give an Anſwer to every one that asks them a Reaſon of the Hope that is in them. But when *God* hath given the People *reaſonable* Faculties on purpoſe that by them they may be able to diſtinguiſh what is *true* from what is *falſe*, for any Party of Men to forbid them the Uſe of theſe Faculties in diſtinguiſhing what is *true* from what is *falſe* in *Religion*, in which above all Things they are moſt highly concerned, it is a moſt *injurious* Uſurpation upon the *common* Rights of *humane* Nature. For by this Means our *beſt* Faculty is rendred *uſeleſs* to us in our *greateſt* Concerns; and whereas *God* gave it to us on purpoſe to guide and direct us, we are utterly deprived of it's Guidance where we have moſt need of it, and where it will prove moſt *fatal* to us if we ſhould happen to err and go aſtray.

A DISSUASIVE FROM APOSTACY.

1 TIMOTHY I. 19.

Holding faith, and a good conſcience; which ſome having put away, concerning faith have made ſhipwrack.

THeſe Words are a part of St. *Paul*'s Charge to his Son *Timothy*, wherein he Patheticaly Exhorts him, as a *Valiant Biſhop*, to take all *poſſible* Care to preſerve the Purity of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine in his Dioceſs of *Epheſus*, which at that time abounded with *falſe* Teachers, whoſe Buſineſs it was to ſow the Tares of Hereſie and *falſe* Doctrine in that *large* and *fruitful* Field, the Cultivation whereof St. *Paul* had committed to his Charge. And that he might diſcharge this Office the more effectually, the *Apoſtle* warns him in the *firſt* Place to take Care of himſelf, that he did not ſuffer *his own* Faith and Manners to be depraved and corrupted by thoſe *lewd* and *irreligious* Principles which thoſe *Antichriſtian* Semi-

naries were then ſcattering among his People; that ſo he might be an Example to his Flock, as well as a Teacher of *pure* and *undefiled Religion.* And this, *v.* 18. he preſſes upon him from the Conſideration of what had been foretold of him by *Divine* Inſpiration, before ever he entred upon his Miniſtry; *viz.* That *he ſhould war a good warfare*, that is, prove a *conſtant* and *courageous* Champion of the *Chriſtian* Faith; which Propheſies, he exhorts him to uſe his *utmoſt* endeavour to verifie both in his Profeſſion and Practice, *by holding*, or as it is in the Original, ἔχων, *having*, or *keeping faith and a good conſcience*; which *later*, viz. a *good conſcience*, *ſome having put away*, concerning the *former*, viz. *Faith, have made ſhipwrack.*

Before we proceed to the Deſign of theſe Words, it will be *neceſſary* briefly to explain ſome Terms in them; as,

1. What is meant by *Faith.*
2. What by a *good Conſcience.*
3. What by putting away a *good Conſcience:* And
4. What by making *ſhipwrack of the Faith.*

1. As for the *firſt*, What is here meant by *keeping the Faith?* I anſwer, By this Phraſe *Faith*, we are to underſtand the *Chriſtian Creed*, or ſummary of thoſe *neceſſary* and *eſſential* Doctrines whereof the *Chriſtian Religion* is compoſed: For at that time there was *little* elſe profeſſed and taught in the *Chriſtian* Churches, but only the *fundamental* Principles of *Chriſtianity*, together with the *neareſt* and moſt *immediate* Inferences from

from them; ſo that few then miſ-believed but ſuch as miſ-believed in *Fundamentals*, and every Error in Doctrine was generally a Hereſie. The *Chriſtian* Faith in thoſe Days lay within a *narrow* compaſs, and ſo it continued till the Wantonneſs and Curioſity of *ſucceeding* Ages ſtarted *diſputable* Opinions, and as they prevailed, *adopted* them into the Family of Faith; inſomuch, that in proceſs of Time, *ſundry* Opinions were received, that were never ſo much as heard of in the *Apoſtolical Age*; and as ſoon as they were received, they were preſently declared neceſſary Articles. And as for the *contradictory* Opinions, though *Chriſtianity* was little or nothing concerned whether they were *true* or *falſe*; yet they ſeldom underwent any *milder* Name than *Hereſie*, or *gentler* Doom than Damnation; which hath been one of the *grand* Occaſions of all the Ruptures and Diviſions that have happened in the *Chriſtian* World. But as for the Faith which the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks of, it was of a much *leſs* Bulk than what it is now arrived to by rolling through the *wild* Opiniatry of *Sixteen Diſputation Ages*, which by degrees have ſwelled it from a *ſhort* ſcript into a *large* Volume. For if we look into the *New Teſtament*, and into the Writings of the moſt *Primitive Fathers*, we ſhall find the Sums of *Chriſtian* Faith therein contained, conſiſting of very *few* Articles, and thoſe ſuch only as are *eſſential* to *Chriſtian Religion*, and ſuch as wherein almoſt all the *differing* Perſuaſions of *Chriſtians* do to this Day concenter. To hold the Faith therefore is to perſevere immovably in the Profeſſion of the *true Chriſtian* Doctrine, ſo far as in us lies, and not to be prevailed upon to deſert or forſake it,

either through *Fear* of Perſecution, or *Hope* of *Temporal* Advantage, or the *Knaviſh* Arts and *Sly* Inſinuations of *Falſe* Teachers.

2. The *ſecond* Term to be here explained, is, What is meant by keeping a *good Conſcience?* Conſcience in general is nothing but our *practical* Judgment directing us what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, and *approving* or *reproving*, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conſcience therefore is *good* or *bad*, according as the Directions are which it gives for the Government of our Lives and Actions. If our Judgment be *falſe* and *erroneous*, and directs us to *do* what we ought to *avoid*, or to *avoid* what we ought to *do*, it is a *bad* Conſcience, that inſtead of being a Light to guide our Steps in the Paths of Righteouſneſs, is only a *wandring Night-fire* that leads us into Bogs and Quagmires. As on the contrary, A *good* Conſcience is our *practical* Judgment well informed, and truly directing us in the Courſe of our Actions what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid:* For a *good* Conſcience is the *true* Eccho of *God* within us, that faithfully reſounds his Voice, and upon all Opportunities of Action, repeats after him to our Wills and Affections. To keep a *good* Conſcience therefore implies *two* Things: *Firſt*, To maintain in our Minds a *true* Senſe of *Good* and *Evil*, and ſo far forth as in us lies, to preſerve our *practical* Judgment *pure* from all *falſe* Principles of Action, and not to ſuffer either our *vicious* Inclinations or *wordly* Intereſt to warp and ſeduce it, and cauſe it to miſtake *Evil* for *Good*, and *Good* for *Evil*. *Secondly*, It implies our following the

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Dictates and Directions of a *good* Conſcience, our doing what it *bids*, and abſtaining from what it *forbids*, and faithfully reſigning our ſelves to its Conduct and Government, and not to be prevailed upon by any Temptation whatſoever to act counter to its Senſe and Perſuaſion. In ſhort, To keep a *good Conſcience* is to live in a *ſtrict* Conformity to the Dictates of a *well-informed* Judgment, and not to allow our ſelves in any Courſe of Action which this Vice-God within us forbids or diſapproves.

3. The *Third* Term to be explained in the Text, is, What is meant *by putting away a good Conſcience?* which being directly oppoſed here to keeping a *good Conſcience*, muſt denote the Contraries to it. To put away a *good Conſcience* therefore is either, *firſt*, to corrupt *our own* Judgment of Things and Actions out of *vicious* Affection or *worldly* Intereſt, and impoſe upon our ſelves *falſe* Notions of *Good* and *Evil*; or, *ſecondly*, to act directly contrary to our Senſe and Perſuaſion; to leave *undone* thoſe Things which *our own* Conſcience tells us we ought to *do*, and to *do* thoſe Things which it tells us we ought not to *do*. In ſhort, To put away a *good Conſcience* is to live in any *known* Courſe of Sin, either of *Omiſſion* or *Commiſſion*; to practiſe Contradictions to *our own* Judgments, and to follow the Inclinations of our Wills againſt the Light and Conviction of our Conſciences.

4. The *laſt* Enquiry, is, What is here meant by making *ſhipwrack of the Faith?* which being here ſet in Oppoſition to *holding*, or *keeping the*

Faith, muſt ſignifie oppoſitely, and conſequently muſt denote not holding and keeping it; or which is the ſame thing, loſing and abandoning it: For in this *Allegory*, the *true Chriſtian* Faith is repreſented as a Ship, and a *good Conſcience*, or a *pure* and *holy* Life as the Pilot, that ſteers and governs it. And indeed, in that State of Things there was no *other* Pilot, but Purity of Conſcience and Holineſs of Life was able to conduct and preſerve this Ship, and carry it *ſafe* through thoſe *inceſſant* Storms of Perſecution, wherein at that time it was toſs'd and agitated. For when *Chriſtians* have once thrown *off* the Obligations of a *good Conſcience*, by abandoning themſelves to a *wicked* and *diſſolute* Life, what is there left to reſtrain them from abandoning their Faith when it ſtands in Competition with their worldly Eaſe and Intereſt? And though there ſhould be no Competition between their Faith and Intereſt, but they might freely enjoy them both without any Diſturbance; yet their *wicked* Lives will naturally tempt them to corrupt their Faith with *wicked* Principles; of which *later* in the next Verſe, he gives an *eminent* inſtance in *Hymenæus*, who had not wholly deſerted *Chriſtianity*, but only renounced *one Fundamental* Article of it, *viz.* The Reſurrection of the Dead: As of the *former*, he gives *another* Inſtance in *Alexander*, who as it ſeems probable, had through the Fear of Perſecution deſerted *Chriſtianity* it ſelf.

The Words thus explained may be reſolved into this Senſe, *That Mens living wickedly againſt the Convictions and Obligations of their Conſcience, doth very much expoſe them to Apoſtacy from true Religion*

Religion into groſs and impious Errors. Thus to *the love of money, which is the root of all evil, the Apoſtle* attributes Men's Erring *from the Faith*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. And that which expoſed thoſe *ſilly women*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. to the Seduction of *falſe* Teachers, was their being *laden with ſins*, and *led away with divers luſts.* And the ſame *Apoſtle* aſcribes *Demas*'s Apoſtacy to his Covetouſneſs, or *inordinate love of this preſent world*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. But that I may evince this Truth more fully, I ſhall give you ſome *particular* Inſtances of the *mighty* Tendencies there are in every *vicious* Courſe of Life to Error and Apoſtacy from *true Religion.*

1. It *corrupts* and *debauches* Men's Reaſon and Underſtanding.

2. It renders the Principles of *true Religion uneaſie* to their Minds.

3. It deprives Men of the *higheſt* Encouragements to Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs in *Religion.*

4. It weakens the *natural* Force of their Conſciences, which is the *greateſt* Reſtraint from *Apoſtacy.*

5. It ſtrengthens the Temptations to Apoſtacy.

6. It provokes *God* to give us *up* to the Power of Deluſion.

1. Living in any *known* and *willful* Courſe of Sin, corrupts and debauches Mens Reaſon and Underſtandings. So long as a Man lives in any *known* Sin he doth not only live without, but againſt his Reaſon, which inſtead of being the Guide of his Actions, hath nothing at all to do with them, but like an *idle* Spectator, doth only

ly behold the *bruitiſh* Scene without any Part or Concern in it. And whilſt a Man thus abandons himſelf to the Government of his own *blind* Will, and lives not only in the *perpetual* Neglect, but Contempt of his Reaſon, it is impoſſible for him not to waſte and impair it. For as our *rational* Faculties are improved and perfected by Exerciſe, ſo they naturally languiſh and decay, through Diſuſe and Inactivity; and conſequently the *leſs* Uſe we make of them in the Government of our Lives and Actions, which is their *proper* Office and Employment, like *ſtanding* Waters they muſt corrupt and putrifie. And indeed there is no *impure* Luſt but doth by its own *natural* Efficacy diſable Mens Reaſon and Underſtanding: For while we are in theſe Bodies, our Mind is fain to work by *bodily* Inſtruments, and to make Uſe of *Brains*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits* in all its Operations; and according as their Temper is *good* or *bad*, its Operations will be *more* or *leſs perfect*: But while a Man indulges himſelf in any *impure* Affection, that will naturally diſtemper theſe Organs of his Mind, and indiſpoſe them for the Uſe of his Reaſon. For ſo Madneſs, which is ſuch a Diſtemperature of the *Brain*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, as doth wholly alienate them from the Uſe of Reaſon and Diſcourſe, is uſually found to be the Effect of ſome *wild* and *extravagant* Affection, ſuch as *Pride*, or *Covetouſneſs*, *Anger*, or *Fearfulneſs*, *Jealouſie*, or *Luſt*; and if theſe Paſſions, being once arrived to their *utmoſt* Rage and Exceſs, do ſo often run into *down-right* Madneſs and Diſtraction, to be ſure every *inordinate* Degree of them muſt be a Tendency towards it, a *great* Diſturbance of Mind, though not a

total

total Diſtraction; and by how much they exceed their *due* Bounds and Meaſures, by ſo much they muſt taint and vitiate theſe *neceſſary* Inſtruments of our Mind and Reaſon. Thus every *inordinate* Luſt doth by a *natural* Influence diſturb Mens Reaſon, and ſully the clearneſs of their *diſcerning* Faculties. So that what *Clearneſs* is to the Eye of the Body, that *Purity* from *vicious* Affection is to the Eye of the Mind; it brightens its Apprehenſions, and renders its Conceptions of Things more *quick*, *diſtinct*, and *vigorous:* Whereas on the contrary, all *diſorderly* Affection doth *more* or *leſs* cloud and diſturb the Brain, chill or inflame the Spirits, hurry them into *tumultuous* Motions, or render them *liſtleſs* and *unactive*; by which *continual* Diſorders, our *diſcerning* Faculties muſt by Degrees be extreamly weakened and confounded. And whilſt the Mind is thus *loſt* in the Fogs of *inordinate* Affection, it is an *eaſie* Matter to ſeduce and miſlead it, it being through the Dimneſs of its ſight apt to be impoſed upon by *falſe* Colours, and tinctured with Prejudice and *undue* Apprehenſions of Things. *Weak* Minds are eaſily abuſed, eſpecially in Matters of *Religion*, which being placed beyond the Proſpect of Senſe, require a *ſevorer* Attention in order to the forming of *right* Apprehenſions concerning them; and therefore the *more* Men weaken their Underſtandings by their Luſts, the *more* they muſt be expoſed to Errors and Deluſions. But then,

2. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin, renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneaſie to Mens Minds. Whilſt a Man leads a *wicked* Life, his *Religious* Principles, if they are *pure* and *true*, will perpetually

perpetually reproach and upbraid him: For there are no Contraries in Nature more *irreconcilable* to *one another* than *true* Faith and *bad* Manners; the *great* Deſign of all *true* Faith being to move and perſuade Men to abſtain from all Ungodlineſs, and *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World.* If therefore a Man's Faith be *true* and *genuine*, he cannot live wickedly without acting againſt the *full* Perſuaſion of his *own* Mind, which muſt neceſſarily render him very *uneaſie*; for in this State of Things he acts with a *ſelf-condemning* Judgment, and every Compliance with his Inclination ſets him at odds with his Reaſon; all the while he is meditating any *wicked* Deſign, he ſtruggles with his Conſcience, and confronts and outrages his *own* Convictions; and when he hath acted it, every Reflection he makes on it is a *bitter* Invective againſt himſelf: Thus ſo long as the Principles of *true Religion* poſſeſs his Mind, he finds himſelf continually hagg'd and oppreſſed by them; they ſit as an *uneaſie* Load upon his Soul, and will not ſuffer him to Sin in quiet, but perpetually cauſe his *ſinful* Delights to go *off* with an *ungrateful* Farewel, and recoil upon him in many a *ſickly* Qualm and Convulſion. In which State of Things he hath no *other* Remedy, but either to forſake his Principles, or his Luſts; or to live in *perpetual* Variance with himſelf; and therefore, if he ſtill reſolve to Sin on, in all probability he will ſoon grow quite weary of *true Religion*, and quit his Mind as ſoon as poſſibly he can of thoſe *ſtern* and *inflexible* Principles which create theſe Diſcords in his Breaſt. And whilſt he is in this Temper it will be an *eaſie* matter to

pervert

pervert him to any *Religion* that will give Eaſe to his *ſtraitlaced* Conſcience, and caſt a more *favourable* Aſpect on his Luſt: For being reſolved to follow his *vicious* Inclinations he now ſees through them, and underſtands by them; and whilſt his Mind runs upon the *falſe* Biaſs of his Luſts, that *Religion* which is moſt *grateful* to them will ſeem moſt *reaſonable* to him. Shew him a way how he may worſhip *God* acceptably without the Expence of a *ſtrict* Attention, and the *inward* Devotion of a *pure* Heart, and *heavenly* Affections; meerly by numbering ſo many Prayers on a String of Beads, by ſeeing a Prieſt act over ſuch a Set of Ceremonies, and hearing him in *varied* Tones ſometimes pronounce, and ſometimes murmur a *Form of Words* in an *Unknown Language*; and though at firſt view it may ſeem very *abſurd* to him, yet the very Looſeneſs and Carnality will be apt to engage his Affections to it, and then they by Degrees will go near to wheedle his Underſtanding into a more *favourable* Opinion of it. Propoſe to him an Expedient how he may go to *Heaven* at laſt without undergoing the Severities of a *ſincere* Repentance and Amendment; tell him that there is a *certain Church* in the World whoſe Prieſts, if he confeſs his Sins to them with any Degree of Sorrow and Remorſe, have *full* Power to pardon and abſolve him; ſo that if he do but take Care not to die without Confeſſion, however he lives he cannot miſcary for ever. He may indeed go into a very *hot* Place called *Purgatory*, and there ſuffer a while very *grievous* Things before he get to *Heaven*; but if inſtead of parting with his Luſts while he lives, he will part with his Mony when he dies, he may at *eaſy* Rates pur-

purchaſe of that *Church* ſuch a Number of *Maſſes*, *Requiems*, and *Indulgencies*, as will in all Probability ſoon procure his Diſmiſſion from thoſe *temporary* Sufferings into *eternal* Happineſs: How *odly* ſoever this Doctrine may appear to his Reaſon, to be ſure it will be *charming* enough to his Luſts; and when once a Mans Luſts are retained the Cauſe is half carried at the Bar of his Judgment. And ſo in all *other* Inſtances it is a *great* Diſadvantage to *true Religion*, and as *great* an Advantage to *falſe*, that Mens Faith and Reaſon are ſo much ſwayed and byaſs'd by their Luſts. For though there is no *Religion* can be *true* but what is *pure* and *holy*, yet it is the Holineſs of *true Religion* that doth provoke their Luſts againſt it, and 'tis their Luſts that do provoke their Reaſon; and when all is done there is nothing doth more ſtrongly incline, or frequently pervert *depraved* and *wicked* Minds to *falſe Religion* than its Complyance with their *vicious* Affections, though this very Thing is one of the moſt *certain* Signs in Nature of its Falſehood.

3. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin deprives Men of the *greateſt* Encouragements to Conſtancy and Steadineſs in the *true Religion*: For doubtleſs the *higheſt* Encouragement to Perſervance in the Truth againſt all Oppoſitions and Temptations, is the Hope of thoſe *glorious* Rewards that await them in the World to come. 'Twas this that guarded the Faith of the *antient* Martyrs ſafe through all the Rage and Cruelty of their Perſecutors, their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, the Sight of which inſpired the *drooping* Souls with an *invincible* Courage; made them deſpiſe *Racks*, and *Wheels*, and *Flames*, and exalt and triumph under

under the moſt *exquiſite* Torments. And indeed what *leſs* Encouragement than the Hope of being eternally *happy* within a *few* Moments could have enabled a Company of *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Biſhops to endure thoſe *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many times they did, when their Tormentors took their Turns from Morn to Night, and plyed them with all Kinds of Tortures till oftentimes they were forced to give over; and confeſs themſelves overcome either through Wearineſs or Compaſſion? But now by indulging our ſelves in any *known* Courſe of Sin we throw away this *Sovereign* Cordial, and leave our ſelves *naked* and *deſtitute* of all the *mighty* Supports it is able to give us under any Temptation to Apoſtacy. For how can we hope for any Good from *God*, and much *leſs* for ſo *great* a Good as a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys amounts to, whilſt we perſiſt in *open* Rebellion againſt him; eſpecially when he hath expreſly ſuſpended this *mighty* Recompence upon our *conſtant* and *faithful* Obedience to his Will, and told us plainly beforehand, that we might know what to truſt to, that if we fail of *this* he will be ſo far from admitting us into that Place and State of Bleſſedneſs, that he will baniſh us *for ever* from his Preſence into *outer* Darkneſs, and *eternal* Wretchedneſs and Deſpair? When by *wilful* Sin therefore we have caſt away our hope of Heaven, what have we left to ſupport our Conſtancy to the Truth if ever we ſhould be called to ſuffer for it? How can it be expected that rather than renounce our *Religion*, we ſhould be contented to part with our *Goods*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, when all our Hope is ſhut up in this Life, and we have

no

no Proſpect of Compenſation either *here* or *hereafter?* If ever therefore we would be *ſtedfaſt* to the Truth againſt all Temptations, we muſt above all Things take Care by a *holy* Life to cheriſh and keep alive the Hopes of *Heaven* in our Breaſts, which is the only Anchor that can hold and ſecure us in a *ſtormy* Sea from making Shipwrack of our Faith.

4. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin weakens the *natural* Force of Mens Conſciences, which is the *greateſt* Reſtraint from Apoſtacy. Indeed, for Men to *apoſtatize* from their *Religion* to ſecure their *worldly* Intereſt is a Thing ſo *baſe* and *infamous*, ſo *foul* an Inſtance of a *cowardly*, *degenerous*, and *proſtitute* Soul, that if a Man were under no *other* Reſtraint but only that Senſe of Honour that is lodged in all *brave* Minds, he would ſcorn ſo *mean*, ſo *poor* a Condeſcention. But yet when all is done, there is no ſuch *powerful* Reſtraint upon Men as that of a *good* Conſcience, which is the *natural* Bridle by which *God* curbs our *head-ſtrong* Nature, and keeps it from flying out into all the *wild* Extravagancies it is inclined to. For it is from *God* and in God's ſtead that Conſcience acts, who is the moſt *powerful* Being in the World: When it *commands*, it is with God's Authority; when it *rebukes*, it is with God's Majeſty; when it *applauds*, it is with God's Complacency: It proceeds not upon Principles of *mere* Policy or Prudence, which require us to act this way *now*, and *anon* the contrary, as Circumſtances alter; but upon the *awful* Principles of Divinity, which oblige us by all that we can hope or fear *for ever*, and require of us the ſelf ſame Things and Actions in all Circumſtances; and the *ſole* Reaſon it

inſiſts

inſiſts on is the Will of *God*, whoſe Pleaſure or Diſpleaſure can make us *happy* or *miſerable* for ever. The Voice of Conſcience is not, *This I judge moſt expedient for thee to do, and this to avoid*; but *this thou muſt do, and this avoid as thou tendereſt the Love of God and dreadeſt his everlaſting Hatred and Revenge:* And it is no leſs than *eternal* Bliſs that Conſcience allures our Hope with, and *eternal* Vengance that it alarms our Fear with; and if Men will not be witheld by ſuch *powerful* Reſtraints as theſe, what can withold them? Whilſt therefore a Man cheriſhes his Conſcience by complying with it and following its Directions, this, if any Thing, will ſecure his ſtedfaſtneſs to the Truth againſt all Temptations; whilſt this hath any Power over him, he will as ſoon eat Fire as *ſacrifice* his Faith to his Intereſt. For, for a Man to renounce his *Religion* upon any Proſpect of *temporal* Gain or Loſs, is ſuch a *flagitious* Violation of all that is *Sacred*, ſuch a *monſtrous* Inſtance of *High-Treaſon* againſt *God*, ſuch an *open* Blaſphemy of his Truth, ſuch a *bold* Defyance of his Majeſty, and in a word, ſuch a Complication of *vile* Perfidy, *baſe* Ingratitude, and *impious* Falſehood, that but to think of it is like looking down from a *ſtupendous* Precipice, that ſwims the Head, and ſtrikes the Mind with Horror and Amazement; ſo that while a Man's Conſcience hath any Power over him, he will no more be able to prevail with himſelf to commit the *one*, than to throw himſelf headlong down from the *other*, whilſt he is under the Horror of the Proſpect; and he will find it much more *eaſy* to endure the worſt of Perſecutions, than to commit ſuch an Outrage and Violence on his Conſcience, and undergo

thoſe *horrible* Reflections and *ſtinging* Remorſes that muſt follow it: But after a Man by wilful *Sinning*, hath often wounded his Conſcience, the *natural* Tenderneſs of it will by Degrees wear off, till at length it grows quite *callous* and *inſenſible*. For what is reported of *Methridates*, that by often drinking of Poiſon, he had ſo *familiarized* it to his Conſtitution, that at length it ſate quietly on his Stomach, and gave him no Diſturbance, is true of Conſcience, which at firſt recoils at every *ſinful* Potion, and cannot ſwallow it without ſuffering *violent* Spaſms and Convulſions; but having been awhile accuſtomed to it, it by Degrees grows more and more *natural*, till at length it goes glibly *down* without ſtraining, and goes quietly *off* without Remorſe or Reluctance. And when once a Man's Conſcience is frozen over by a Cuſtom of Sinning, it will every day grow *harder* and *harder*, and at length be able to bear the *heavieſt* Loads of Guilt without Relenting; and when once Things are reduced to this State, *Good* and *Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice* are Things *indifferent* to him which he chuſes or refuſes as they come to hand, and are *more* or *leſs ſubſervient* to his *preſent* Convenience. He can *blaſpheme*, and *pray*, *oppreſs* and *give Alms* with the ſame Unconcernedneſs of Mind; and to act the *Devil* or the *Saint* are Parts ſo *indifferent* to him, that he can perform them both with the ſame Remorſleſſneſs. And when a Man is thus got looſe from the Reſtraints of his Conſcience there is nothing ſo *bad* that can come amiſs to him. If therefore while he ſtands in this Poſture his *temporal* Intereſt ſhould chance to beckon him to change the *beſt Religion* in the World

World for the *worſt*; to pray to *inſenſible* Images and *dead* Mens Ghoſts inſtead of the *everliving God*; to let go Subſtances to catch at Shadows and Ceremonies, and to part with the moſt *rational* Truths for the moſt *palpable* and *fulſom* Contradictions; he hath no Principle in him *ſtrong* enough to withold him from a *baſe* Compliance, his Conſcience being laid faſt aſleep, which whilſt awake would have trembled at ſuch an *horrid* Propoſal. And though by thus proſtituting his Faith to his Intereſt, he at once renounces his *God*, his *Saviour*, and all his Hopes of *future* Immortality; yet his *inſenſible* and *remorſleſs* Heart is no more toucht or affected with it, than if it were the *ſlighteſt* Peccadillo. Thus by letting go a *good Conſcience* Men pave themſelves an *eaſie* Way to Apoſtacy from *true Religion*, which otherwiſe would be one of the moſt *craggy* and *difficult* Paſſages in all the High-Way to *Hell*.

5. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin doth very much ſtrengthen and enforce the Temptations to Apoſtacy. He who lives under the Conduct and Government of a *good Conſcience*, takes Care to regulate his Affections towards the Things of this World, ſo, as neither to fear the *Evils* of it *too* much, nor love the *Goods* of it *too* well; but makes a *juſt* and *equal* Eſtimate of both, and by that proportions his Affections towards them; and he who doth this, diſarms them of their *tempting* Power, which is chiefly owing to our ſelves, and the *falſe* Eſtimate we make of them. 'Tis *our own* Imagination that gives Life and Efficacy to the Charms and Terrors of the World, and renders them ſo *ſucceſsful* and *victorious*:

ſtorious: We fancy *that* to be in them which is not, and ſo are affected not ſo much with the Things themſelves, as with the *falſe* Repreſentations that we make of them. But he, who by following the Dictates of a *good Conſcience*, hath reduced his *wild* Affections within the Liſts of Reaſon and Sobriety, can from thence defie the World, and maintain his Poſt againſt all its Temptations. He loves its *Goods* no better than they deſerve, and conſequently he loves them not ſo well as to part with his Virtue, his Innocence, and his Soul for them. He dreads its *Evils* no farther than they are truly *dreadful*, and conſequently is fully ſatisfied, that to Sin is much more *dreadful* than to ſuffer; and he hath found by often Experience, that in the *faithful* diſcharge of his Duty, there is far more *Peace*, more *Joy*, and *Satisfaction* than in all the *vain* Allurements of this World. He hath found another *Heaven* upon Earth, beſides theſe *temporary* Enjoyments; a *Heaven* within *his own* Breaſt compoſed of *joyous* Hopes, and *bleſſed* Expectations; and in this *Heaven* hath often found himſelf a thouſand times more *happy* than among all the Feſtivities of an *earthly* Paradiſe; and therefore knows very well that he is bid to his Loſs whenever he is tempted to exchange the *one* for the *other*. He is throughly ſenſible, having already found it to his Smart, that by Sinning he ſhall ſuſtain a much *heavier* Loſs, and expoſe himſelf to far more *exquiſite* Agonies of Mind than any this World can threaten him with all; and therefore certainly reckons upon it, that when ever to avoid a Sin he incurs a Suffering, he wiſely chooſes of *two* Evils the *leaſt*. And while his Soul ſtands thus affe-

affected, it is *ſhot-proof* againſt all Temptations, and much more againſt thoſe Temptations which ſollicite him to renounce his *Religion*, and in which he knows by Experience there is far more *Good* than the World can propoſe to him in Exchange for it. He knows both how *little* the World, and how much *true Religion* is worth; and having made a *juſt* Eſtimate of both, to propoſe to him any *worldly* Hope as a Price for his Faith, is the ſame Thing as to offer a Miſer Droſs for his Gold. His Mind is fixed in this Perſuaſion, that all the Miſchiefs *this* World can do him are *inconſiderable* to one who muſt live *for ever* in *another* unſpeakably *happy* or *miſerable*; and therefore to threaten him into Apoſtacy with any *worldly* Fear, is to attempt to blow *up* a Rock of Marble with a Squib of Wild-fire. But when once a Man hath taken *off* the Reſtraints of his Conſcience from his *wild* Affections, and let them looſe to the World, they will aid and aſſiſt its Temptations againſt him, and animate them with a thouſand times more Life and Vigour than is in their *own* Natures. For as for the *Goods* of this World, they could never bewitch us as they do, did we not give a Dreſs to them; we paint their Faces, and varniſh them over with an *artificial* Beauty, and then fall in Love with *our own* Fucus; and ſo much as we value and affect them beyond their *natural* Worth, ſo much Power we give them to conquer and inſlave us. When therefore by leading a *ſenſual* and *wicked* Life, a Man has wholly devoted himſelf to the World, he hath put himſelf into the Worlds Power to be commanded and diſpoſed of as it pleaſes. And now if any *worldly Good*

beckons and invites him, his *mad* Affection will preſently hurry him after it, though it be through *thick* and *thin*, through the moſt *flagitious* and *enormous* Courſes. If any *worldly Evil* threaten and alarm him, he muſt immediately fly, though it be from *Virtue* and *Innocence*, from *God* and *Heaven*, and all that is *Sacred* in *Religion*. His Affections have render'd him a *meer* Laquey to the *Goods* and *Evils* that are *without* him, and whither ever they ſend him, he muſt go, where-ever they lead him, he muſt follow, let their Vagaries be never ſo *wild* or *wicked*. If therefore, while his Soul is thus inſlaved to the World, he ſhould be tempted by it to *Apoſtatize* from his *Religion*, what hath he to reſtrain or ſecure him? For ever ſince he got looſe from his Conſcience, he is wholly led by his Affections, and theſe being chained and faſtned to the World, hale him after it which way ſoever it moves. So long as his *Religion* and his *worldly* Intereſt conſiſt, and go hand in hand, he is very well content to own and follow it; but if ever a Storm of Perſecution ſhould part them, in all Probability he will follow his Intereſt, and like the *treacherous Orpha*, give his *Religion* a *parting* Kiſs and leave it. For his Heart is now ſo wedded to the World that he eſteems nothing ſo *good* as its *Goods*, and nothing ſo *evil* as its *Evils*; and the *one* being his *Heaven*, and the *other* his *Hell*, all other Conſiderations are overcome by them; and to obtain the *one*, and avoid the *other* he muſt ſtick at nothing, no not at renouncing his *God* and his *Religion*, together with all his *Hopes* of a *future* Immortality.

6. And

6. And laſtly. Living in any *known* Courſe of Sin provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Deluſion: For ſo long as Men ſubmit themſelves to the Guidance and Direction of a *good Conſcience*, the Spirit of *God* who is a Spirit of Truth abides with them, and not only directs their Wills, but alſo informs their Underſtandings, and enables them to diſcern the Beauty and Reality of thoſe *heavenly* Truths, which he hath revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. For though, ſince he hath revealed already the whole Will of *God* to us concerning our *eternal* Salvation, we have no Reaſon to expect that he will reveal *new* Truths to us; yet ſeeing ſo far forth, as it is *neceſſary*, he hath promiſed and engaged, that he will co-operate with us to enable us as well to underſtand the Will of *God* as to perform it; we have the *greateſt* Reaſon in the World to depend upon it, that ſo long as we cheriſh his *heavenly* Inſpirations, by yielding to them our *free* and *ready* Compliance, he will be ſo far an *aſſiſting Genius* to our Underſtandings, as to ſuggeſt to us thoſe Truths which he hath already revealed, and ſet them before our Eyes in ſo *fair* a Light, as that we ſhall not fail more clearly to diſcern, and more diſtinctly to apprehend them than otherwiſe we ſhould or could have done. For when he writes his Truth upon our Minds, it is with ſuch a *Victorious* Sunbeam as will endure neither Cloud nor Shadow before it. Whenever he ſpeaks, He ſpeaks not to our Ears but to our Minds, and repreſents Things nakedly and immediately to our Underſtandings. He converſes with our Spirits, as *Spirits* do with *Spirits*, without involving his

Senſe in *articulate* Sounds or *material* Repreſentations; but objects it to us in its own *naked* Light, and *characterizes* it immediately on our Underſtandings. And as he propoſes the *Divine* Light to us, ſo he alſo illuminates our Minds to diſcern and comprehend it: He raiſes and exalts our *Intellectual* Powers, and as a *vital* Form to the Light of our Reaſon, invigorates and actuates it, and thereby renders its Apprehenſion of Things more *quick*, and *piercing*, and *ſagacious*. Thus doth the *Holy Spirit more* or *leſs* aſſiſt us in the *true* Underſtanding of *Divine* Things, as he finds us *more* or *leſs compliant* with his *heavenly* Pleaſure; and though he ſtands no more obliged to render our Minds *infallible* than our Wills *impeccable*, yet ſo long as by our *ſincere* Obedience to his *holy* Suggeſtions, we keep our ſelves under his Conduct and Direction, we may depend upon it, he will either preſerve us from all *dangerous* Errors, or if for *juſt* Reaſons he ſhould permit us to fall into any ſuch, they ſhall not prove *dangerous* to us, but either we ſhall be convinced of them while we live, or obtain Pity and Pardon for them when we die. But whilſt we perſiſt in any *willful* Courſe of Sin, we do not only violate *our own* Conſcience, but alſo repel thoſe *good* Motions of the *Spirit* of *God*, whereby he ſtrives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, ſhall at length provoke him wholly to forſake and abandon us, to give us up to *our own* Hearts Luſts as *deſperate* Wretches, with whom he hath hitherto ſtrove and ſtruggled in vain, and of whoſe *future* Recovery there remains no *farther* Hope or Proſpect.

ſpect. And when He hath forſaken us, our Mind will not only be left *naked* and *deſtitute* of all thoſe Helps and Advantages for the underſtanding of *Divine* Truths, which it receives from him, but alſo be expoſed to the Cheats and Fallacies of *Evil Spirits*, whoſe Recreation it is to put Tricks upon our Minds; to banter and play upon our *eaſie* Faith, to caſt Miſts before our Eyes, and therein to juggle away all *true Religion* from us, and foiſt in the Room of it, the moſt *fulſom* Errors and Miſtakes. For ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us of *Antichriſt* the *great* Deceiver, that he ſhould *come with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs to them that periſh, becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved.* And that for that Cauſe, *viz.* their not receiving the *truth in the love of it, God ſhould ſend them ſtrong deluſion that they ſhould believe a lye*; that is, by abandoning them to the Power of cheating and deluding Spirits: *That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 10, 11, 12. And *God* grant that this at laſt prove not our Fate, that becauſe we have ſinned againſt the *cleareſt* Light, and gone aſtray in all Unrighteouſneſs under the *beſt* and *pureſt Religion* in the World, we are not at length given up by *God* to follow the *wild* Deluſions of *Antichriſt*, and to believe all thoſe *fulſom* Lyes and Impoſtures which he from Age to Age hath been impoſing upon the World. But whether it prove thus or no, this I am ſure of, that by perſiſting in any *vicious* Courſe againſt the Light and Conviction of our Conſciences, we highly provoke *Almighty God* to withdraw his Grace from us, and give us *up* to *our own* Hearts Luſts;

Luſts; and when this is done, *our own* Hearts Luſts will ſoon betray and give *up* our Faith to *falſe* and *vicious* Principles of *Religion.*

And now having ſhewn at large what *ſtrong* and *prevalent* Tendencies there are in a *wicked* Life to Apoſtacy from *true Religion*, I ſhall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three* Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, What a *great* Malignity there is in Mens being *inconſtant* to, and *apoſtatizing* from the *true Religion* in Compliance with their *ſinful* Affections; it being, as you ſee, the *ill* Daughter of a *bad* Mother, (a *debauched* and a *diſſolute* Conſcience) and conſequently partaking of all its *natural* Bane and Malignity, even as all other *bad* Effects do of the *malignant* Nature of their *bad* Cauſes. But the Truth of this will more fully appear by conſidering the *particular* Evils which Mens Inconſtancy to, and Proneneſs to revolt from the *true Religion* implies; of which I ſhall give you theſe five Inſtances:

1. The *great* Impiety of it.
2. The *deſperate* Folly of it.
3. The *foul* Diſhoneſty of it.
4. The *ſhameful* Cowardize of it.
5. The *vaſt* Hazard and Inſecurity of it.

1. Conſider the *great* Impiety of it. He who can part with his *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Terms than a *full* Conviction of the Falſhood of it, is either a *down-right Atheiſt*; who believing no *Religion* to be *true*, go-

governs himſelf by this Principle, That the *wiſeſt* Courſe is to profeſs none but that which is uppermoſt, and moſt for his Intereſt; or a *prophane* and *impious* Wretch, who, though he believes his *own Religion true*, exchanges it for *another* which he believes to be *falſe*, upon no *other* Conſideration, but ſo much *temporal* Advantage to boot: By which he plainly declares, that in the Ballance of his Eſtimation the Odds between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, the Declarations of *God*, and the Impoſtures of the *Devil* is ſo *inconſiderable*, that the *leaſt* Addition of the *tranſitory* Goods of this World to the *later*, renders it of *ſufficient* Weight to turn the Scale againſt the *former*, and that for his part he is not much concerned whether the *Almighty* be his Friend or Foe; and provided he may but enjoy his Eaſe and Pleaſure a *few* Years longer here, he is very well contented to part with all his Hopes and Intereſt in *God for ever*. For this is the *natural* Conſtruction of Mens Apoſtacy from the *true Religion* in Conſideration of their *worldly* Intereſt, that *that* Intereſt is in their Eſteem far more *eligible* than *God* with all his Power and Goodneſs, that it is *better* to be without *God* in the World than without Preferment, and that *that* Man makes a very *good* Bargain, who gets a *good* Place in Exchange for his *Maker*, and with the *treacherous Judas* ſells his *Saviour*, though it be but for *thirty Pieces of Silver*: Which is ſuch a *monſtrous* Degree of Impiety, as one would think, ſhould be *ſufficient* to ſcare and affright the moſt *courageous* Sinner that hath but the *leaſt* Apprehenſion of *God*, or Senſe of *Good* and *Evil*. But then,

2. Conſider

2. Conſider the *deſparte* Folly of Mens abandoning their *Religion* in Complyance with their *vicious* Affections. For he who without *through* Conviction abandons the Profeſſion of his *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *falſe*, doth together with that moſt certainly abandon all the *bleſſed* Rewards, and incur all the *dreadful* Penalties that *true Religion* promiſes and denounces, becauſe though his *Religion* perhaps may be *falſe*, yet in renouncing it whilſt he believes it *true*, his Will doth as maliciouſly renounce the *true Religion* as if it really were ſo. He thought it *true*, and yet renounc'd it, by which he plainly declares that if it had been *true* he would have renounced it; ſo that whether it be *true* or *falſe*, it's all one to him, his Will is the *ſame*, his Crime and Guilt the *ſame*; it is *true Religion* he intentionally renounces, and therefore in ſo doing he doth intentionally renounce all his Concern and Intereſt in *true Religion*. Now what a *deſperate* Piece of Folly is this for a Man to part with all his Stock in the *Common Bank* of *Religion* which if it be not a *down right* Sham and Impoſture, is of *everlaſting* Moment and Concern to him, only for a *preſent* Gratification of ſome *vain* and *unreaſonable* Luſt; to divorſe himſelf *for ever* from the Love of *God*, to quit all Title and Intereſt in the *precious* Blood of the *Saviour* of the World only to curry a *ſhort-lived* Favour with Men, with Men whoſe Breath is in their Noſtrils, and who within a *few* Days or Years muſt go *off* the Stage, and leave us here perhaps *forlorn* and *deſtitute*? To part with all my *glorious* Hopes of *Heaven*, which are my *beſt* Heaven upon Earth; and which is *worſe*, with *Heaven* it ſelf, where I have Treaſures of

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Bliſs ſufficient to maintain me in a moſt *happy* Port to *eternal* Ages; only to gain or ſecure a *tranſitory* Eſtate or Preferment, which, while I have, it cannot make me *happy*, and from which erelong I ſhall be torn and divided, and not be a Farthing the *better* for *forever*; to expoſe one ſelf as a *publick* Spectacle of Scorn and Contempt to *God*, and Angels, and all the *wiſe* and *good* Part of the *rational* World for a *ſhort extemporary* Blaze of *pompous* Splendor and Greatneſs which lies at the Mercy of every Counter-blaſt of Fortune, and in all Probability will e'er long expire in *Smoak* and *Stink*, *Wretchedneſs* and *Infamy*; to plunge one ſelf head-long into all the Agonies and Torments, the Horrors and Deſperations of a *woful Eternity*, only to eſcape a *ſhort* Perſecution, and a *glorious* Martyrdom; when a little after perhaps I ſhall ſuffer a *great* deal *more* and *longer* under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury* without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cauſe, and being aſſured of an *immortal* Recompence than I could have done under the Hand of the Executioner with it? And yet all theſe *mad* Pranks that Man plays at once, who abandons his *Religion* in Complyance with his Luſts.

3. Conſider the *foul* Diſhoneſty of it: For, beſides that our *Religion* being the moſt *ſacred* Pledg committed to us by *God* for *our own* Uſe, and the Uſe of our *lateſt* Poſterity, we cannot viciouſly deſert and abandon it without betraying of *God*, and falſifying our Truſt to him; and which is *worſe*, without ſquandering away the moſt *ineſtimable* Good that ever he committed to Men, upon our own *baſe* Luſts, and his moſt *execrable* Enemies,

mies, which is Diſhoneſty blackned with the *foulest* Ingratitude: Beſides this, I ſay, by forſaking our *Religion* in Complyance with any *leud* Affection, we not only do a *diſhoneſt* Thing at *preſent*, but alſo totally diſcard the Obligations to Honeſty for the *future*: For there is nothing can rationally oblige a Man to be throughly *honeſt* but only his *Religion*, or *inward* Senſe that it is his *indiſpenſable* Duty towards *God*, before whoſe *righteous* Tribunal he muſt one Day give an Account of all his Actions. The *two great* Motives of *humane* Action are *Religion*, and *worldly* Intereſt: Now as for *Religion*, that conſiſts of *fix'd* and *unalterable* Principles, which will by no Means ply or bend to the Alterations of *outward* Affairs and Circumſtances; but do in all Conditions move and oblige us with *equal* Force and Vigour; whereas *Worldly* Intereſt is a *fickle* and *mutable* Thing that varies and alters with every *outward* Turn and Revolution: So that *that* which is my Intereſt to *Day*, may prove my Damage to *Morrow*; and if it ſhould, whatever Part I act to *Day*, it will oblige me to act the contrary to *Morrow*. When therefore a Man hath let go his *Religion*, and hath nothing but his Intereſt to hold him, it is *Croſs or Pile* for the *future* whether you find him an *honeſt Man* or a *Knave*; becauſe from henceforth he will be *Knave* or *Honeſt* according as it ſerves his Turn, and that which ſerves his Turn to *Day* may prove his Loſs and Prejudice to *Morrow*; ſo that whether to *Day* or to *Morrow* he proves a *true* Man or a Cheat, wholly depends upon the *Die* of Fortune, and you muſt conſult his Stars to find the *lucky* Hour or Moment when you may ſafely truſt him. For after the Wretch hath been

been ſo *perfidious* as to renounce his *God* and his *Religion*, he hath no *one* Principle remaining in him upon which you can faſten any *laſting* Confidence. As for his Intereſt, that is ſuch a *fickle* and *inconſtant* Thing that there is no truſting it; if it plead for you *now*, the *next* Turn of Affairs it may be retained againſt you, and the Man being got looſe from all the Tyes and Obligations of Fidelity, you may be ſure he will ſtick at nothing be it never ſo *foul*, that his *preſent* Intereſt invites him *to* to ſerve himſelf; he will make no Bones, whenever he hath a *fair* Opportunity, to *cheat* and *betray* his own Father; or ſupplant his *deareſt* Friend or Benefactor; and what ſhould hinder him? his Conſcience and Religion being gone, and with them all *binding* Principles of Truth and Honeſty. For when a Man forſakes his *Religion* out of any *vicious* Affection, he doth in Effect make this publick Declaration to the World: *By this my own Act and Deed I do here for ever renounce all the Obligations to Honeſty and fair Dealing with God or Men, and am reſolved for the future to be deaf and inexorable to all the Importunities of Conſcience and Religion. From henceforth I will liſten to no other Call but that of my worldly Intereſt; when that bids me be honeſt, I will be honeſt, and when it bids me play the Knave, I will play the Knave; and therefore for the future I warn all that know me to truſt me no farther than they can make it my Intereſt to be true, and not to venture the moſt trifling Matter in which they are unwilling to be wronged, either upon my Faith, or Word, or Oath, without demanding of me ſuch ample Securities as may render it impoſſible for me to wrong them without wronging my ſelf. For this is the Principle I now in-*

tend

tend to live by, That is always beſt and fitteſt to be done, that is moſt ſubſervient to my preſent Intereſt. This in Conſtruction of Fact is the Profeſſion which that Man takes *up*, who in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection abandons the Profeſſion of his *Religion.*

4. Conſider the *ſhameful* Cowardize of it. The Advantages of *true Religion* are *great* enough to encourage a Mind of any Conſtancy or Firmneſs to charge through the *greateſt* Difficulties the World can interpoſe between *them* and *him.* Who that hath the Spirit of a Man would ever boggle to wade through a *narrow ſhallow* Stream of *temporary* Sufferings, whilſt on the *farther* Shore he beholds a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys ready to receive and reward him? But for a Man to turn his Back, and run away from *God* and *Heaven* for Fear only of being diſappointed by ſome *leud*, or *covetous*, or *ambitious* Hope, is ſuch an Inſtance of *vile*, *proſtitute* Baſeneſs as is beneath even Contempt and Deriſion. For what Danger or Difficulty dares that Wretch encounter, that dares not ſtand by his *Religion*, in which he confeſſes all his *future* Hopes are involved, for Fear of loſing *ſuch* a Place, or being diſappointed of *ſuch* a Preferment, which within a *few* Days or Years he knows very well he muſt loſe *for ever?* He who hath a Mind capable of being ſcared out of his *Religion* by ſuch *mean* Conſiderations as theſe, is *good* for nothing but only to be made the Foot-Ball of Fortune; to be kick'd *up* and *down* upon her *ſcornful* Toe at Pleaſure, who by threatning him with the *ſmalleſt Evil*, can huff him out of the *greateſt Good*,

Good, and finding him a *wretched paſſive* Thing that hath not Strength enough to reſiſt her *meakeſt* Impreſſions, makes him her Sport and Recreation, and turns him into any Thing, and toſſes him any whither ſhe pleaſes; from *Truth* to *Falſhood*, from *God* to the *Devil*, and from *Heaven* to *Hell* without the *leaſt* Controul or Oppoſition. For the *poor* Man's Soul is grown ſo *tender* and *effeminate*, that for the *greateſt* Good in all the World he cannot endure the *leaſt* Air of Suffering to blow upon him: Tell him of Suffering for *Righteouſneſs Sake*, and the very Thought of it frights and appales him. Preſent but a Perſecution at his Breaſt, and bid him ſtand and deliver, and the *creſt-fallen* Pultroon is preſently ready to cry out, *O ſpare my Life, ſpare my Skin! and take my Religion, take my God, and all my Hopes of Heaven and Immortality.* And who but an *infamous* Coward would ever endure to be hector'd out of ſo *vaſt* a Good by the *weak* and *impotent* Evils of this World; which if they do their *worſt* can only rob him of a *few tranſitory* Enjoyments, which without their Conſtraint he muſt ere long take his leave of *for ever?* How ridiculouſly *mean-ſpirited* would it be for a Man to deliver *up* his Purſe to a Thief, who he knows hath no *other* Weapon but a *ſlender* Switch to hurt and offend him? But for a Man to deliver *up* his *Religion*, and with that his *God* and his *Heaven*, at the demand of a *ſhort Skin-deep* Affliction, which can only diſeaſe him for a *few* Moments, and ſhall then determine in *everlaſting* Pleaſure and Delight, is a thouſand times more *mean* and *ridiculous*.

5. And Laſtly, Conſider the *vaſt* Hazard and Inſecurity of a Man's parting with his *Religion* in Compliance with his *vicious* Affections: For that which moves him to it is only his Proſpect of living at Eaſe a *few* Years longer, or gratifying ſome *covetous* Deſire or Ambition; but whether he obtain theſe Ends by parting with his *Religion*, is vaſtly *hazardous* and *inſecure*. Perhaps, when I have acted this *impious* and *perfidious* Part, I may be caſt into ſuch Circumſtances, as may force me upon *impartial* Reflections, and make me ſee, whether I will or no, the Blackneſs and Infamy of my Revolt and Apoſtacy; which if it ſhould happen would inevitably raiſe ſuch a Swarm of Horrors in my Conſcience, and caſt me into ſuch Agonies and Convulſions of Soul, as will render me a *Hell* and a *Devil* to my ſelf, and give me a thouſand times more Pain and Uneaſineſs than all thoſe *temporal* Evils could have done, for fear of which I ran away from my *Religion*. And if to ſhun *Poverty*, I ſhould throw my ſelf into *Deſparation*; if to avoid a *Priſon*, which to an *innocent* Mind with a *righteous* Cauſe can make a *Heaven* upon Earth, I ſhould caſt my ſelf into a *Hell* upon Earth; if to keep in a *whole* Skin, I ſhould bring upon my ſelf the *intollerable* Anguiſh of a *wounded* Spirit; if to eſcape being *rejected*, *diſgraced*, and *diſcountenanced* by Men, I ſhould expoſe my ſelf to the *perpetual* Clamour and Reproaches of *my own* Conſcience: If theſe Things, I ſay, ſhould happen, as its very *probable* they may, I ſhall find my ſelf miſerably diſappointed of that Eaſe and *quiet* Enjoyment for the ſake of which I baſely abandoned my *Religion*; I ſhall find that to ſave my Garments from being

being ſinged, I have thrown my Body into a *conſuming* Flame, and only expoſed my Breaſt to ſave my Buckler. But then ſuppoſe this ſhould not happen; ſuppoſe my Conſcience ſhould be *ſtupid* and *inſenſible* enough to bear the Guilt of my Apoſtacy without Remorſe or Relenting; yet my Proſpect of Gain and Advancement in this World is extreamly *hazardous* and *inſecure*. For it is a thouſand to one, but they to whoſe *Religion* I turn, and upon whoſe Favour I depend, will by *one* Means or *other* diſcover my Falſhood and Inſincerity; and if in the Courſe of my Actions, or any other *ſuſpicious* Indication, they ſhould find Cauſe to be *jealous* that I embrac'd their *Religion* only to ſerve my Intereſt, and againſt the Perſuaſion of *my own* Mind; if they are *wiſe* they will treat me as a *dangerous* Perſon, upon whom there is no Reliance; For how can they imagine that I ſhould be *true* to them who have been *falſe* to my *Religion*? It is a *Proverb* among the *Jews*, *That Proſelytes are not to be truſted to the Tenth Generation*; and by *too* many *woful* Inſtances in *our own* Neighbourhood, we find it a Maxim in ſome Mens Politicks, That a *New Convert* is no more to be truſted than an *Old Heretick*. And though for a while they may think fit to uſe me as a *proper* Tool to ſerve a *preſent* Deſign, yet to be ſure they will uſe me no longer than they needs muſt; and when I have done their Work, I muſt expect to be thruſt out to make Room for ſuch as they can more ſafely depend on. And if this ſhould not happen, as it is very probable it may; yet ſeeing all *humane* Affairs are liable to *perpetual* Turns and Mutabilities, perhaps upon the *next* Revolution a *contrary* Intereſt may

appear upon the Stage, and then I shall find my self deserted of all my *present* Supports and Dependencies, and like a *forlorn* Wretch utterly abandoned both by *God* and Men, without any *other* Company to entertain me in this my *mournful* Solitude, besides the *woful* Remembrances of my Guilt and Shame. To such *infinite* Uncertainties of obtaining their Ends are those *miserable* Men exposed, who desert their *Religion* in pursuit of their *worldly* Interest. And so I have done with the first Inference: But then,

2. From hence I infer, How *cautious* a Man ought to be in changing his *Religion*, or any Principles of it, least that which induces him to it be not so much his Conviction as his *profligate* Conscience. I do not pretend, that Men are always to maintain the same Persuasion in Matters of *Religion*; for such an Obligation would as effectually serve the Interest of *false Religion*, as of *true*. Whatever some Men pretend, we are all of us from *Top to Bottom*, a Company of *fallible* Creatures; and if we are in an Error, as it is possible we may, it is our Duty to endeavour to be *better* informed. Nor do I deny, But an *honest-minded* Man, without being in the least influenced by a *bad Conscience*, may be innocently, or at least pitiably seduced from *Truth* to *Error* by *false* Colours and *probable* Appearances, for want of *sufficient* Sagacity to distinguish between *Sophistry* and *true Reason*. But if in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection, or in Pursuit of any *worldly* Interest, a Man deserts the Truth, and takes up *false* and *erroneous* Principles, his Error is no longer imputable to the *Weakness* of his Un-

Understanding, but to the *Wickedness* of his Will; and a *wilful* Error in the Faith will prove as *fatal* and *damnable* to him, as a *wilful* Wickedness in his Manners; and whenever his *wretched* Soul shall appear before the *great Searcher of Hearts*, it shall certainly be treated by him as a *wilful* Apostate that hath perfidiously renounced his *Baptismal Vow*, and abjured his *God*, his *Saviour*, *Truth*, and *Religion*. And seeing it is thus, it very highly concerns Men, as they love themselves, or have any Regard of their own *everlasting* Well-being, not to desert their *Religion* or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Motive than a *thorough* Conviction of its Falshood; not to suffer themselves to be seduced from it by any *temporal* Interest or *odious* Affection, lest in so doing they *reprobate* themselves from *God*, and all the *blessed* Hopes of a *glorious Eternity hereafter*. For when Men are upon changing their Persuasions in *Religion*, it is an *ordinary* Thing for their Interests and Passions so to intermingle with their Reasonings, that without some Care and Observation of themselves they will not be able to discern which of the *two* hath the *greater* Influence upon them; insomuch, that I am very apt to think that there are a great many *careless* and *unsuspecting* People that are hurried meerly by their Interest and Passions out of *one Religious* Persuasion into *another*, who yet through *gross* Neglect and Inobservance of themselves, believe themselves to be Converts upon *pure* Reason and Conviction. Perhaps upon the Sollicitations of *worldly* Interest their Minds were wrought into a *strong* Inclination to a Change; insomuch, that they vehemently wish that they could but satisfie

their Reason and Conscience of the Truth and Reality of that *new* Persuasion, which these their *importunate* Passions so earnestly invite them to embrace; and then with this *strong* Byas of *worldly* Interest upon their Minds, away they run hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince and satisfie themselves; and if in this Heat of Affection they can but light upon any *little* shew of Probability, that will quickly improve them into *irrefragable* Proofs and Demonstrations: For when a Man enquires, whether such a Doctrine be *true* with a *strong* Inclination of Will to find it so, he will be afraid to consult the Reasons and Arguments against it, lest they should convince him that it is *false*, and thereby defeat his Inclination. And when once a Man is so prepossessed as that he will listen only to *one* side of the Question, be that side never so *absurd* and *ridiculous*, it is a *hard* Case if he cannot find Reasons enough to wheadle himself into the Belief of it; for his very Inclination to believe it will deter him from entring into a *strict* Examination of those Reasons, and being afraid to examine them *too* far lest he should find them *false* and *unconcluding*, if he can but discern the *least* Colour of Probability in their *first* View and Appearance, that will be sufficient to convince him, and render him a *mere* and *credulous* Convert: For indeed, the Man was a Convert in his Heart upon Reasons of *worldly* Interest, before ever he thought of those Reasons of Religion that made him a Convert in his Judgment; so that 'twas his Interest that converted his Affections, and his Affections that Converted his Faith; and yet all this while, for want of *Self-*

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reflection, the Man imagines that his *new* Faith is wholly owing to the Reaſon and Evidence it carries with it; whereas, would he but impartially conſult himſelf, and take a *little* Pains to review the Steps and Progreſs of his Change, where it began, and how it proceeded and concluded, he would ſoon be forced to acknowledge, that the *firſt* and *fundamental* Reaſon of it was nothing but a *worldly* Intereſt. Wherefore to ſecure you againſt this *dangerous* Piece of *Self-deluſion*, by which I doubt there are *too* many Men do eternally Ruine and Deſtroy themſelves, I will endeavour to give you ſome *certain* Signs and Indications by which you may be able to judge, if ever you ſhould be tempted to change your *preſent Religion* or Perſuaſion, whether you do it ſincerely and upon *pure* Conviction of Mind, or in *meer* Compliance with any *vicious* or *worldly* Affection: And I ſhall give them to you in theſe *following* Queries, which I earneſtly beſeech you ſeriouſly to propoſe to your *own* Souls, whenever any ſuch Temptation ſhall befal you.

1. Whether upon your *firſt* Entrance on the Debate of Changing, your Prejudice lie on the ſide of your *preſent Religion*, or of that you are invited to turn to?

2. Whether you have not ſome diſtaſte in your Affections to your *preſent Religion*, before you entertained any Overtures of changing it?

3. Whether that which gave you your *firſt* Inclination to Change was not ſome *temporal* Intereſt?

4. Whether before you entertained any Intention to Change, you were fully reſolved to conſult impartially both Sides of the Queſtion?

5 Whether when you *firſt* entred upon this Conſultation it was your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever ſhould happen to you, to adhere to that Side which ſhould appear moſt *reaſonable?*

6. And laſtly, whether before you were inclined to change; you did conſcientiouſly comply with the Obligations of *Religion*, and continued to do ſo afterwards?

1. When you fall under any Temptation to Change, ask your *own* Soul whether your Prejudice lye on the Side of your *preſent* Religion, or of that which you are tempted to turn to? There is no Man that ſincerely profeſſes any *Religion*, but muſt be ſtrongly prejudiced for it, eſpecially if he imbibed it betimes, and was principled in it by his Education; for how can he ſincerely profeſs it without engaging his Affections towards it, and heartily eſpouſing its Intereſt? For though I confeſs it is a Fault for Men ſo to preingage themſelves to any *Religious* Principles, eſpecially ſuch as are not exceeding *clear* and *evident* (and ſuch are all the *Fundamentals of Chriſtianity*) as to ſhut his Ears againſt all *contrary* Reaſons, and obſtinately reſolve never to part with them, or ſo much as to admit into our Conſideration any Argument or Evidence againſt them; yet after all it is impoſſible for any *ſincere* Profeſſor of any *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *falſe*, to be ſo indifferently *affected* towards it as not to ſide with it

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in his Will as well as in his Faith and Judgment; ſo that whenever he is tempted to deſert it the Temptation muſt neceſſarily find him ſtrongly preingaged for it; and unleſs it bring along with it *ſufficient* Evidence not only to convince his Reaſon, but alſo to captivate his Prejudice, it will never be able to prevail. For if ever the Man loved his *Religion*, his Paſſion will contend for it as well as his Reaſon; ſo that all Arguments againſt it, be they never *ſtrong* and *cogent*, will at *firſt* eſpecially find a *difficult* Acceſs to and an *unwarrantable* Reception in his Mind; and though he is ſo overborn by the Strength of the Evidence againſt it that he can no longer forbear *doubting* and *ſuſpecting* it, yet ſtill he is very loth to part with it, and ſtill he wiſhes it were *true*, though he is not able to evince it ſo, till after having endured a *long* Siege of *ſtrong* and *preſſing* Arguments he is driven at length out of all his Defences, and then his Prejudice yields as well as his Judgment to ſurrender *up* his *erroneous* Faith to the *prevailing* Power of his Convictions: This is the *natural* Temper of every *ſincere* Profeſſor of any *Religion*. When therefore you are at any Time tempted to change your *Religion*, before you proceed, pauſe a while, and conſider ſeriouſly how you ſtand diſpoſed, and which way your Heart is preingaged, whether to the *Religion* you have hitherto profeſſed, or to *that* for which you are invited to change it. Conſult a while with *your own* Souls to which ſide of the Queſtion you are moſt inclined to liſten, whether to the Side which aſſerts your *preſent* Perſuaſion, or to *that* which contradicts and oppoſes it. Obſerve but which Way your Wiſhes

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and your Paſſions move, whether *for* or *againſt* it, and which Reaſons and Arguments you are moſt concerned for; *thoſe* that oppoſe, or *thoſe* that defend it. For aſſure your ſelves if the Temptation to Change find you *lukewarm* and *indifferent*, or ſo much as *eaſy* and *pliable* to its Propoſals; if it finds you *unaverſe* to admit of a *contrary* Perſuaſion, or *forward* to catch at every Shew of Evidence againſt that *Religion* which you have hitherto profeſſed, or ready to be *ſtagger'd* out of it upon the *firſt* Appearance of any Reaſons or Probabilities againſt it; if, I ſay, you find any of theſe *evil* Symptoms upon you when you are *firſt* tempted to change, you have *great* Reaſon to ſuſpect that you are a *falſe Hypocrite* to that Profeſſion which you have hitherto made; that there is ſome *vile* Affection in you that hath got the Aſcendent of your *Religion* and your Conſcience, and that if in this Temper you proceed to a Change you will be found to be a Convert of your Luſts and not of your Convictions.

2. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, examine whether you have not entertained ſome Diſtaſt to it in your Affections, before you proceed any farther; whether you have not entertained ſome Quarrel againſt it upon the Account of the Diſturbance it gives you in your *vicious* Delights and Enjoyments; or, becauſe it *too* ſeverely exacts of you *univerſal* Sanctity of Life and Manners, to which of all Things in the World your Heart is moſt averſe, and without which the *inflexible* Principles of your *preſent* Perſuaſion will not permit you to hope for any Favour from *God* either *here* or *hereafter*. Conſider whether upon theſe Accounts

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counts your Mind be not cankered with a *secret* Enmity against your *Religion*; whether under those Qualms of Conscience it often gives you, your Heart doth not rise against it, and you do not sometimes secretly wish that you could release your Faith from its *tyrannick* Principles which give you so much Pain and Disturbance, and submit it to some *gentler Religion* that would permit you to Sin in quiet, or at *least* prove more indulgent to your Lusts: For if this be your Temper you are in very *great* Danger of being betrayed by it into any *false* and *corrupt Religion* that shall be tender'd you in Exchange for your own. For if this *other Religion* offer but any *fair* Terms to your *vicious* Affections, or propose but any Expedient how to accommodate the *vexatious* Quarrel between them and your Consciences; if it doth but any way reconcile your Hope of *Heaven* to your *vicious* Manners, by directing you to some *easier* Terms of Salvation than that of forsaking all Unrighteousness, and *worldly* Lusts, *and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present* World; if it will but admit of any Commutation of that *unsufferable* Penance of Godliness for *bodily* Exercise, of *inward* Mortification for *a long* Fast or *a sound* Whipping, of putting *off* the *old Man* for putting *on a Hair Shirt*, of running the Race of a *holy* Life for a *sacring* Pilgrimage, or the like; this is a *Religion* for your Tooth, with which your *naughty* Heart will be ready enough to fall in love upon the *first* Interview: and when once it hath gained our Heart and Affections, if we do not take the *greater* Heed they will quickly gain our Faith and Judgment: For when a Man is *angry* with his own *Religion* because it sits *uneasy* on his Conscience,

ence, if a more *safe Religion* presents it self to him, he can hardly forbear wishing it were *true*, though as yet he hath no Evidence that it is so; and then a very *slender* Evidence will suffice to induce a Belief of the Reality of any Thing which a Man earnestly wishes and desires. If in this *ill* Temper of Mind therefore you should be tempted to change your *Religion*, it concerns you as much as your Souls are worth to look about you; for you have a Seducer in your Breast, a *prevalent insinuating* Seducer, viz. some *vile* and *sinful* Affection, who, if you listen to his *charming* Perswasions, will certainly betray you into a most *damnable* Apostacy. Wherefore before you proceed to examine the Merits of the Cause, consider seriously with your selves that that Disturbance which your *present Religion* gives to your *vicious* Affections, for which you are so angry with it, is so far from being a *just* Ground to suspect it that it is a *great* Evidence of the Truth of its Doctrine, because it is a *sensible* Demonstration of its Holiness, which is an *inseparable* Concomitant of Truth, and therefore for you to desert it upon this Motive as in Effect to pronounce it a *false Religion*, because it gives you a *sensible* Experiment of its Truth and Reality.

3. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, consider whether that which gave you the *first* Inclination to change was not some *temporal* Interest; whether before ever you admitted any Thought of a Change, you did not perceive *another Religion* appear upon the Stage attended with all the *fair* Hopes and Advantages of this World, and whether this Prospect did not *first* suggest to you a *great* Inclination

clination to enter into its Retinue. I do not deny, but that even *worldly* Considerations may so far influence *honest* Minds as to put them upon a more *severe* and *impartial* Scrutiny of their *present* Persuasions in *Religion*; and unless it be in Case of *palpable* Truth or Falshood it is but *honest* Prudence, when a Man's *temporal* Interest lies at stake, to take Care that he is sure of his Hand, that he doth not throw it away upon a *false* Persuasion in a Fit of *blind* Humour or Obstinacy, and sacrifice that to an *erroneous* Judgment which he owes to no *other* Altar but Truth's. And indeed before I throw my self upon any Suffering, whether it be *Loss* or *Pain*, I am bound in Conscience diligently to enquire whether it be for *Truth* or *Righteousness* sake; lest instead of receiving the Crown of Martyrdom I am sent away to seek my Reward in the *Paradise of Fools*. But if meerly upon the Consideration of any *present* Loss or Advantage I find my self strongly inclined to change my *Religion* before ever I enter into the Merits of the Cause to examine the Reasons *pro* and *con*, it is a *certain* Sign that *that* Loss or Advantage that inclines me hath a more *powerful* Influence upon me than my *Religion*; that I love the World better than *God*, and do prefer my *earthly* Expectations before all my Hopes of *everlasting* Happiness. And if in this *ill* Temper of Mind I should be tempted to a *present* Change, it concerns me as much as my Soul is worth to be very *careful* what I do; For I stand upon the Brink of a Precipice, the *foul* and *fatal* Precipice of Apostacy, into which if I fall I am ruined *for ever*. For if in changing my *Religion* it be found that I followed this my *wicked* Inclination more than any

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sincere Conviction, I must expect to be treated by *God* as an *Apostate* and *Renegado*, as a *wilful* Deserter of his Cause, and Betrayer of his *sacred* Truth. But if I change while I stand thus inclined, it is fearfully *hazardous* but this will be found to be the Truth of the Case; for in all Probability my *wicked* Inclination will cast a Mist before my Understanding, and so darken its Prospect that it will hardly be able to distinguish the *grossest* Sophistry from the *clearest* Reason. So that now those Arguings which before I saw through with half an Eye; and look'd upon as most *absurd* and *ridiculous*, will appear to my *abused* and *byass'd* Mind in the Colours of *clear* Evidence and *plain* Demonstration, and I shall be ready to surrender *up* my Faith to those *trifling* Pretences of Reason and Authority, which before I laughed at and despised: Now, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church* will seem a very *pregnant* Proof that all the *Bishops of Rome* from St. *Peter* are ordained the *Supreme Heads* of the *Church*, and the Fountains of all *Ecclesiastical* Authority, though they are not so much as mentioned in it, no nor from any thing that appears so much as thought of. Now *This is my Body* looks like a *substantial* Evidence of the Truth of *Transubstantiation*, and of all those *wild* Absurdities it contains; though those Forms of Speech, *I am the true Vine*, and *I am the Door* do as substantially prove that *Christ* bears Grapes, and turns upon Hinges. Now every Thing will appear to me in a quite *different* Guize from what it did before, and I shall fancy that I spy Demonstration where before I could only discern Probability; for a *good* Sum of Money, or a *rich* Preferment

ment is a *ſtrange* Clearer of ſome Mens Eyeſight. Thus when a Man begins to think of changing his *Religion* under the *powerful* Influence of his *worldly* Intereſt, that is uſually the only *effectual* Reaſon that leads and perſuades him: As for *other* Reaſons, they only ſerve for Form-ſake to diſguiſe the *foul* Apoſtacy into ſome Reſemblance of a *ſincere* Converſion; for till his Intereſt ſtruck in with them, they ſignified nothing with him, made not the *leaſt* Impreſſion on his Mind; but being back'd with that, all on a ſuddain they are wondrous *cogent* and *perſuaſive*; from whence it is evident that they received their Strength and Force from his Intereſt, without the Air of which they are not able to operate; and conſequently that the Change of his Faith is owing to the *over-ruling* Intereſt of his Covetouſneſs and Ambition, and not at all to the Prevalence of Reaſon and *ſincere* Conviction. For 'twas *that* Intereſt that ſtrongly inclined him to change before ever he knew any Reaſon for it, and then 'twas *that* Inclination that made his Reaſons, and created his Convictions; and let him talk what he pleaſes of *Reaſon*, *Scripture*, and *Authority*; if he was ſtrongly inclined to change before he was moved to it by Reaſon and Evidence, it is plain that the *prevailing* Motive of his Converſion was either the Fear of loſing ſome *good warm* Place, or the Hope of gaining ſome *important* Station or Preferment. And if this be found the Truth of his Caſe when he comes to appear before the Tribunal of *God*, it had been a thouſand times *better* for him that he had never been born; for then he will be found a *baſe* Deſerter of his *God*, a *treacherous Judas* to his *Saviour*, and a *perfidious*

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Renegado from his *Religion*, and according to the Quality of his Sin and Guilt receive his Portion of Damnation.

4. Consider whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved impartially to consult both sides of the Question. I doubt there are *too* many among us that *first* resolve to change their *Religion*, and then begin to enquire after Reasons and Arguments against it, and that their Resolution to change is so far from being the Effect of *sincere* Conviction, that their Conviction is the Effect of their Resolution. *First*, Some *vile* Affection, or some *temporal* Interest recommends another *Religion* to them that either gives them leave to be *wicked* without Remorse or Disturbance, or promises them Gain and Advancement; upon which they resolve *right* or *wrong* to entertain and embrace it; and then to excuse themselves to their own Consciences, or to vindicate their Reputation to the World from the Scandal of being *down-right* Apostates, they fall a hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince themselves of the Truth of it, or at least to make the World believe that it was not their Interest but their Conviction that turned them. And when Men thus resolve *first*, and enquire *afterwards*, to be sure their Enquiry will be very *partial*; for being fully resolved to change their *Religion* upon some *vicious* or *secular* Motive, it is become their Interest to pick Holes in it, and to reason or cavil themselves out of the Belief of it. And this makes them shy of bringing the Matter under a *fair* and *impartial* Examination, lest while they are

are ſeeking Reaſons to overthrow their Faith, they ſhould find Reaſons to eſtabliſh and confirm it. So that they begin their Enquiry with theſe ſecret Intentions; *We will liſten only to one ſide of the Cauſe, and leave the other to ſhift for it ſelf; and ſeek for as many Arguments as we can againſt our Religion, but none for it. We will read the Books and conſult the Teachers of one ſide only*, viz. *the oppoſite ſide to our preſent Belief and Perſuaſion, and if among them we can but find Arguments enough to render the contrary Perſuaſion any way probable, we will ſubmit our Faith to it without any farther Enquiry, and not trouble our ſelves to examine the Evidence on the other ſide, for Fear we ſhould be convinc'd in ſpight of our Teeth that the Truth lies there; and then our Conſcience will never let us be quiet, but be perpetually clamouring againſt us for baſe and impious Apoſtates.* That this is the *foul* and *hypocritical* Intention of *too* many among us is *notorious* enough by their Practice; they leap from *Church* to *Church*, and from *one* Communion to *another*, without any Pauſe or Conſideration; they are with us to *Day*, and gone from us to *Morrow*, and are ſuch *Muſhroom*, *extemporary* Converts, that before ever we hear they doubted of their *own*, they are confirmed in a *contrary Religion*. In ſhort, they ſteal out of their *Religion* ſo ſoftly, and with ſo *little* Noiſe, that they are commonly gone before ever we hear they are going, as if they were afraid we ſhould ſtop and detain them by *better* Reaſons and *fuller* Convictions. Whereas had theſe Men any Conſcience or Honeſty in them, they would conſider, that *Religion* is a Thing *too ſacred* and *ſerious* to be thus dallied and trifled with, and that to change ones *Religion* is a matter of ſuch *vaſt* Importance as re-

quires a *long* and *through* Conſideration, and a very *clear* and *full* Conviction of Mind; that there is *too* much depends upon it to part with it upon *ſlight* Pretences, and that it concerns them as much as an *Eternity* of Bliſs amounts to, not to deſert it upon any *other* Inducement but that of a *through well-weighed* Perſuaſion of Conſcience. And if they had *had* any ſuch *honeſt* Thoughts about them while they were under the Temptation to change, they would never have admitted any Doubt of their *Religion*, but upon *great* and *palpable* Evidence; and then they would have doubted long before they would have concluded againſt it, and not have precipitated their Judgment *hand over head* into a *contrary* Perſuaſion, till they had *firſt* applied themſelves for Reſolution again and again to their *old* Guides and Paſtors, and with all *due* Deference to their Authority, had ſtrictly examined all their Reaſons and Anſwers, till they had throughly inſpected their Arguments *pro* and *con*, and equally heard both ſides of the Cauſe; till they had read, adviſed, and conſulted on both ſides, and weighed the whole matter *over* and *over* with the *greateſt* Care and Exactneſs. But when Men run away from their *Religion* in an Inſtant, without ever obſerving this *regular* Proceſs of *ſincere* Enquiries, it is a *plain* Caſe that their Wills were reſolved before their Underſtandings, and that they were converted before ever they were convinced; and conſequently that it was not Reaſon and Conviction that turned them, but Luſt or Intereſt: For though when they are turned they may perhaps be very *diligent* to ſeek Conviction, yet this is only an After-game which they are fain to play to ſave their Conſcience or their Reputation.

5. Con-

5. Conſider before you entertain any Intention to change, Whether it be your *unfained* Intention, whatever ſhall happen to you, to adhere to that ſide which ſhall appear moſt *reaſonable*. Perhaps you are not yet arrived to that Height of Impiety as to reſolve *right* or *wrong* to change your *Religion*, whether you find it *true* or *falſe* upon a *juſt* and *fair* Examination; for this is ſuch an *horrible* defiance of *God*, ſuch an *expreſs* and *abſolute* Renunciation of all that is *ſacred* and *good* as no Man can be guilty of who is not utterly abandoned of all his *natural* Senſe of *Religion*, and Reliſh of *Good* and *Evil*. But yet perhaps you may be tempted to change with the Proſpect of ſuch Advantages on the *one* ſide, and Calamities on the *other*, which though it doth not obtain of you that *baſe* and *wicked* Reſolution; yet doth ſo far prevail as to engage you upon a *freſh* Enquiry to try whether upon *ſecond* Thoughts and *better* Conſideration, you can ſatisfie your own Minds of the Truth of that *Religion* you are invited to turn to, that ſo you may, if poſſible, comply with a *good* Conſcience, and ſecure your Intereſt in doing your Duty. And thus far you are ſafe enough; but before you proceed any farther, it concerns you, as you tender your *everlaſting* Intereſt, to look into your *own* Souls, and conſider ſeriouſly whether you are unfeignedly reſolved, whatſoever the Conſequence of Things may be, to cleave faſt to the Truth of *God* on which ſide ſoever you ſhall find it. Put the Queſtion to your ſelves over and over, *O my Soul, here are ſuch Advantages, and ſuch Calamities before you, importuning you to change your preſent diſcountenanced Religion for a more thriving and*

proſperous One: Are you now reſolved fairly and impartially to examine the Merit of the Cauſe? And if thereupon you ſtill find Reaſon to believe that your *preſent Religion* is the very Truth of *Jeſus*, will you rather renounce *thoſe* Advantages and incur *thoſe* Calamities than forgoe it? Will you follow the Truth whereſoever you find it, and whitherſoever it ſhall happen to lead you, though it be from Preferment into Perſecution? Are you reſolved by the Grace of *God* to proſtrate all your *temporal* Hopes and Fears before it, and rather to loſe any *Good*, or ſuffer any *Evil* than deſert it? For let me tell you, if you find your Heart ſhrink at this Propoſal, or that you have any *reſerved* Intention, if the worſt come to the worſt, rather to part with your *Religion* right or wrong, than to ſhake hands with your *temporal* Intereſt, you are in a very *unfitting* Temper to examine on which ſide the Truth lies. For it is a *plain* Caſe, your Mind is under a *prevailing* Byaſs of *temporal* Hopes and Fears, which will be ſure to incline it to favour that ſide of the Queſtion which is moſt for your Intereſt, and 'twill be impoſſible for you to examine fairly and judge impartially whilſt your Judgment is thus bribed and corrupted by your Intereſt. For your Will hath already determined upon the Matter before ever your Underſtanding hath heard the Cauſe, and it is your *ſecret* Intention, right or wrong, to forgoe your *Religion* rather than your Intereſt, if ever they come in Competition. So that now you will be obliged in your *own* Defence to uſe your *utmoſt* Art to ſet the *faireſt* Colours upon the Evidences againſt your *Religion*, and to ſtifle

and

and enervate thoſe that aſſert and maintain it, leſt they ſhould ſo confirm you in the Belief of it as that, when Occaſion requires, you will not be able to ſurrender it *up* without committing an *horrible* Outrage and Violence upon your ſelves. Wherefore before you ſuffer your *worldly* Hopes and Fears to ſummon your *Religion* upon a *new* Tryal, be ſure you fix this Reſolution in your Souls; *By the Grace of God I will now lay aſide all Intereſt and Affection, and ſtrictly examin the Evidence on both Sides with an equal and unbyaſs'd Judgment. I will attend to nothing but the Reaſons of Things and the pure Merits of the Cauſe; and wherever I find the Truth lies, whether on the Side of my Intereſt or againſt it, I will be ſure to follow it whatſoever ſhall be the Event and Iſſue.* For if upon the Temptation of any *worldly* Intereſt you bring your *Religion* to a *new* Tryal, with this *ſecret* Intention, that though it ſhould ſtill approve it ſelf to your Judgment, yet you will rather part with it than abandon *that* Intereſt, this very Intention will be apt to blind and miſlead your Judgment, to arm your Wit and Reaſon againſt your *Religion*, and to ſet all your Faculties at work to argue you out of it, and pervert you from it to a *contrary* Faith and Perſuaſion; which if it ſhould accompliſh, you will certainly be found *guilty* of a *wilful* Apoſtacy when you come to be tryed before the Tribunal of *God*, to whoſe *all-ſeeing* Eye the moſt *ſecret* Motions of your Souls are as *viſible* as if they were written on your Foreheads with a Sun-beam; who ſees your *treacherous* Heart, and *falſe* Intention rather to forſake his Truth than your Intereſt, and knows very well that it is this that ſeduces you,

and

and gives Force to thoſe *falſe* Reaſons and Convictions that impoſe upon your Judgment, and betray your Faith.

6. And laſtly, When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, conſider whether before you were inclined to change you did conſcientiouſly comply with the Obligations of it. We have *too* many Men that pretend to be mighty *inquiſitive* after the *true Church* and the *true Religion*, and yet live as if there were no ſuch Thing as *true Religion* in the World, and quietly allow themſelves in ſuch *impious* Courſes as do openly affront the *common* Principles of all Religions. There is nothing they dread ſo much as *Hereſy*, and, if you will believe them, are monſtrouſly concerned to examine whether the *Church* with which they now communicate be *Catholick* or *Heretical*; and yet all this while they perſiſt without any Concern or Remorſe in the moſt *damnable Hereſy* in the World, and that is a *wicked* and *immoral* Life. So that upon comparing their *Atheiſtical* Lives with the *loud* Cry they make about the *true Catholick Faith* and *Church*, one would be tempted to think that their *Chriſtianity* began at the *wrong* End of their *Creed*, and that they believed in the *Holy Catholick Church* before they believe *in God the Father Almighty*, or *in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord*; Which is ſuch a *groſs* and *fulſom* Piece of Hypocriſy as one would think any *modeſt* Man ſhould be aſhamed of. For in the name of *God*; Sirs, What have you to do to wrangle and make a Noiſe about *Religion*, whoſe *profligate* Manners are a Shame and Scandal to *common* Humanity? It is a Reproach to any *Religion* for *you* to name it, and Shame to any *Church* for

for *you* to pretend to it; and therefore when ſuch as *you* raiſe a Cry after the *true Church* and *true Religion*, it is a *plain* Caſe that whatever Pretence you bring upon the Stage you are prompted by ſome *baſe* Intereſt behind the Curtain. And is it not a *pleaſant* Thing to hear ſuch *Profligates* as theſe pretend to be *Converts*, who only turn from *one* Opinion to *another*, but ſtill continue as *wicked* and *unreformed* in their Manners under the Opinion they turn to, as they were under *that* they turned from? Theſe are ſuch Converts as there is no *Church* in the World that advances *true* Piety above *worldly* Intereſt, but would glory to loſe, and bluſh to gain: And what *Diogenes* ſaid of a *wicked* Fellow that praiſed him, that the *Religion* may ſay which thoſe Men turn to, *What Hurt have I done, what wicked Principles am I guilty of that ſuch vile Wretches as theſe ſhould commend and embrace me?* For for God's ſake, what is it that they are converted to? Is it to any Thing that renders them *wiſer* or *better* Men? No, The contrary is *too notorious* through the whole Courſe of their Actions. Well then, it ſeems they are converted to ſomething that doth them no manner of Good, that ſerves them to no *true* End of *Religion*, that is to a *meer empty* Notion that only gingles about their Underſtandings, but hath no *good* Influence on their Hearts and Manners. Had their Converſion proceeded upon *pure* Principles of Conſcience, that would have obliged them to change their Manners as well as their Opinions; there being very *few* Opinions in *Religion* ſo *contradictory* to the *natural* Sentiments of Conſcience as a *vicious* and *immoral* Life. Supposing that the *Papal Supremacy*, *Purgatory*, and

and *Tranſubſtantiation* were true, yet that the *contrary* Doctrins to theſe are Errors can never be ſo evident to any Man's Conſcience, as that *Drunkenneſs*, *Adultery*, *Fraud* and *Oppreſſion* are Sins; and therefore for any Man to pretend that he forſook *thoſe* Errors out of Conſcience, who yet makes no Conſcience of continuing in *theſe* Sins is ſuch a *tranſparent* Hypocriſy as hath not Vizor and Diſguize enough to abuſe either the moſt *Candid* or *Credulous*. If therefore before you are reſolved to forſake your Sins you are tempted to forſake your *Religion*, it is a *plain* Caſe that it is not your Conſcience or Conviction that tempts you, but your Luſt or Intereſt. Had it been Conſcience, it would have been far more *importunate* with you to reform your Manners than your Faith, and to become *good* Men, than *Catholick Believers*; and therefore under your *preſent* Circumſtances you ought to be very *careful* what you do, and how you comply with the Temptation, leſt to all the Reſt of your Sins you add that *foul* and *fatal* one of Apoſtacy, and thereby fill up the Meaſure of your Iniquities, and *finally* provoke *Almighty God* to abandon you as you have abandoned him, and give you up for *loſt* and *deſperate*.

F I N I S.